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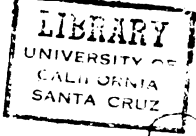


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IN THE CHINESE
CUSTOMS SERVICE

PAUL KING





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IN THE CHINESE
CUSTOMS SERVICE

1st Edition - O.P.

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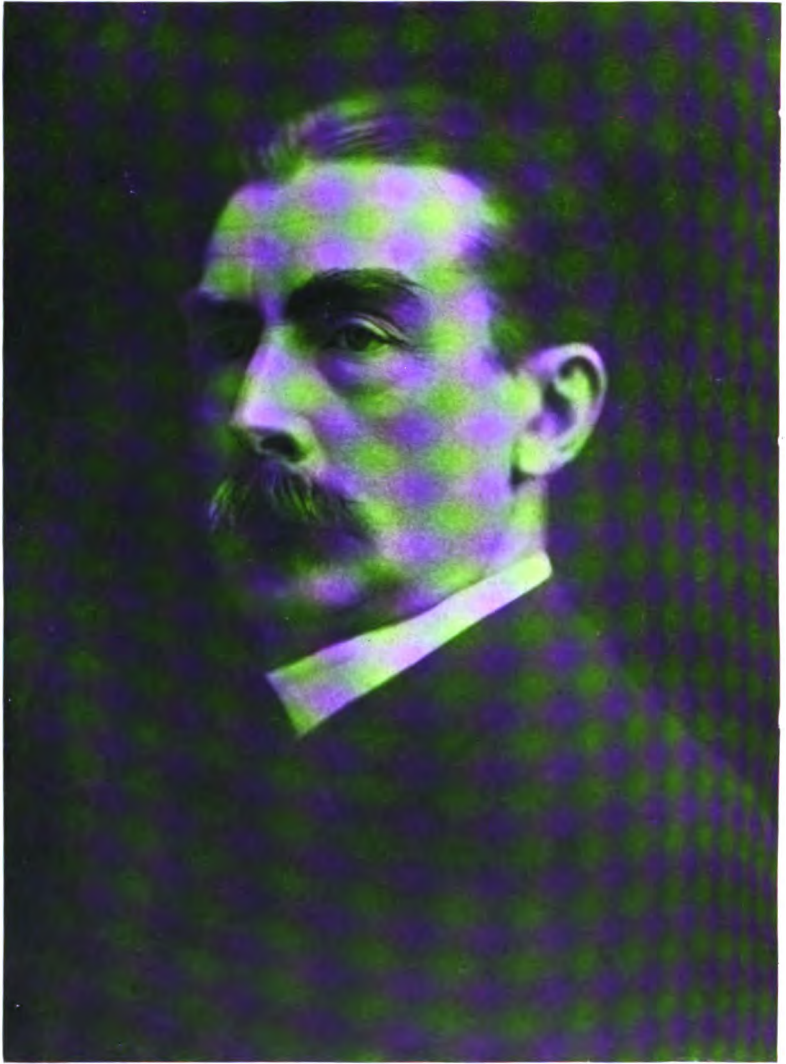
BY

GERALD PHILIP STEVENS

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In this book the author gives his experiences in various parts of the world. Amongst other places referred to and described are Uganda and Kenya, also the Malay Peninsula, Singapore, South Africa and West Africa

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THE AUTHOR.

Frontispiece.

IN THE CHINESE CUSTOMS SERVICE

A PERSONAL RECORD OF FORTY-
SEVEN YEARS · *By* PAUL ^{Henry} KING

SOMETIME COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS IN CHINA

WITH TWO PORTRAITS

T. FISHER UNWIN LTD
LONDON: ADELPHI TERRACE

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FOREWORD

I CANNOT CLAIM that somebody asked me to write what follows, but I felt an urge towards it and did it.

Whether anybody, now or in the future, will be glad of something outside the bare bones of History about the Chinese Customs Service and its Creator, Sir Robert Hart, is for others to decide.

“The camel driver has his opinions—and the camel also has his !”—*Arabian saying*.

IN THE CHINESE CUSTOMS SERVICE

CHAPTER I

Early years in London—Taken to see Mr. Hart in 1866—Haileybury—Dresden—Hong-Kong in 1874.

I WAS BORN IN LONDON, the second son of Paul John King, sometime Senior Registrar in Chancery, whose uncle on the maternal side was Sir Nicholas Tindal, the well-known Chief Justice of England.

My first schooling was at Burnside's in South Hampstead, and I learnt to play cricket at the old Eton and Middlesex ground on the lower slopes of Primrose Hill. It was there that my first "setback" in life occurred, the forerunner of many others, as this record will show. I had just begun to fancy myself as a slow bowler in imitation of a very fat man of local fame named Walker, when a summons in person by our family maid covered me with confusion: "Master Jol" (my pet name), "your ma says it's time for you to come home to tea!"

My first introduction to boxing and fencing—continued later on at Haileybury—also dates from that period. From Haileybury I passed on to Dresden, and recall a very happy year in that beautiful city with Professor Heinrich and his charming family. He was a good old "Haus Vater," rare now in later-day Germany. We lived in strictly German style, and our amusements were all of a piece—Gargantuan club

dinners, followed by dancing for the younger people ; and skating on the Grosser Garten lake in winter, round which we also drank " bier " and listened to the band in summer. Under these conditions I learnt German rapidly on the Joey Ladle principle, and added considerably to my knowledge of the French language by swapping lessons with a young Turk whose education had been begun and finished in Paris. Being a nice-looking youth of a lively complexion, he had made good use of his time in both halves of the Paris world. He added much to my insight in French and still more in other departments of worldly experience which need not here be dilated upon, but I fear he did not get much benefit from my English tuition in exchange.

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 drove all the English home, but I had seen Vienna and Prague, the Austrian Tyrol and the Saxon Switzerland, and came back to my family in London in a German-built suit, with a veneration for Goethe and Schiller, an enthusiasm for Heine and Hauff, and some exact (Teutonic) notions as to Gott and the Universe not usually taught at English public schools. I have always been a voracious reader and have enjoyed to the full all my life the " wider view " which a working knowledge of French and German gives to an English boy.

Once more at home and one of three brothers none of whom had yet commenced to earn his own living, it became a question as to what was to be done with me. I tried commerce, and ran about Mincing Lane very happily for a year and a half, chiefly because I had a reputation from the German Gym as a light-weight boxer. This gave me favour with the sporting element in the Commercial Sales Rooms. Incidentally I learnt a lot about indigo and colonial produce at the St. Katharine Docks, and was occasionally trusted to make purchases on the firm's account.

Then came a sudden reverse. (N.B.—Nothing to do with my activities in the Lane.) One morning three solemn-looking men came into our office and informed us that the firm of Blankety Blank & Co. was in liquidation, and the only person who was required of the eight young clerks was the book-keeper. So I went home with the *mens conscia recti*, but nothing much else on me.

In the family crisis which followed my father bethought himself of his old friendship with Sir Robert (then Mr.) Hart, the world-known Inspector General of the Chinese Customs Service. The reply was prompt and to the point: If your son can pass an ordinary Civil Service examination he can be given an appointment as a Fourth Assistant at the (then) silver equivalent of £400 a year.

Ye Gods! Four hundred quid! Could I pass? Well, I did, after a few months' cramming up forgotten school knowledge of the competitive "exam" kind. I might have got ploughed, but luckily there was a paper designed to test general knowledge and intelligence, as well as one in French and German. I had not been in the Lane for nothing, so what with business knowledge, old Professor Heinrich's views of Moses and the Bible, and the Parisian experiences of my little Turkish friend, I knew quite a lot "about things," and was duly "passed"—"educationally and medically"—and given an appointment as a Fourth Assistant, A in the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service. I was also given a cheque for £200 to provide passage and outfit.

As I have said, my father had known the Inspector General for quite a long time, and I accompanied my father when he went to see Mr. Hart at the Berkeley Hotel in St. James's Street in 1866. I remember how he came forward from a dark corner of the room and shook hands with us in a curious shy manner. I was struck by that, but cannot recall anything else about the visit.

A few weeks after appointment found me on board a Messageries Maritimes liner *en route* for Hong-Kong. The voyage was uneventful, save for one incident in the Mediterranean. One fine afternoon, as the good ship was bowling along at some fourteen knots under sail and steam, a sudden shock sent all on deck sprawling on hands and knees. A scene of considerable excitement followed. Our white-whiskered skipper tore up on the bridge and the whole ship's company rushed about the decks. "Filez," "filez" was the "mot" for any unlucky passenger who came in their way. We were apparently hard and fast on a sandbank somewhere about twenty-five miles from Alexandria. Luckily amongst the passengers was no less a person than Ferdinand de Lesseps, then in the zenith of his Canal fame.

He proposed to our captain to send away the chief officer in the ship's lifeboat to Port Said, and gave him a mandate to bring back as many steam tugs as might be required. By this time it was getting dusk and the wind was freshening every minute. The whole ship was a mass of ropes and cables, hauling this way and that. Suddenly we began to move, and in a few minutes were afloat again. Monsieur de Lesseps and our skipper beamed on one another. Madame de Lesseps and all her little boys and girls were "calmed," and the whole ship became once more normal. The British on board, who up to that moment had been somewhat distant with one another, thawed and agreed that in an emergency they would rather be on one of their own ships, and on this basis many friendships were struck up. I got to know Mr. William Keswick, head of Jardine, Matheson & Co., and his very charming wife, but it was not until we arrived at Hong-Kong that I realized how big a position the "Ewo Taipan" had in that colony. Both he and his wife showed me much kindness, and their lovely house and grounds at East Point were at once a delight and a revelation.

I had a letter of introduction—tickets for soup they were called in those days—to Sir Arthur Kennedy, the Governor of Hong-Kong, and spent a very pleasant afternoon at Government House playing croquet with his daughter and a young curate, like myself not long out from home.

Hong-Kong in 1874 was a very different-looking place to the present city. One landed from a six-oared gig at steps just below the Clock Tower. The old Club and the old Hong-Kong Hotel were close by, both very comfortable places if not quite so much up-to-date as the present buildings. But deep verandahs and large rooms are valuable adjuncts in the almost perpetual heat of Southern China, and with majestic slow-moving punkahs had much in them to invite comparison, not altogether to their disadvantage, with the blaze of electric lamps and the whirl of mechanical fans which often fail either to soothe or to cool. However, one must not be *Laudator temporis acti*, only in the bustle and hustle of daily life as now obtaining in the Far East one sometimes looks back affectionately at the calm dignity of old-time "Raffles" at Singapore, and the quiet and spacious "interiors" of a bygone age in Hong-Kong. The Peak Railway was still a dream. I scaled the Rock on foot—with chair following, and came down the same way. A few very hardy pioneers had bungalows on the mountain-side. I noticed one bungalow with roof securely moored to the soil with stout cables. This was to prevent forcible removal by a passing typhoon.

CHAPTER II

My first port, Swatow, 1874-78—Sketches of small-port life—Learning Chinese under difficulties—I see the great I.G. for the second time.

DUTY, HOWEVER, CALLED. My orders were for Swatow—a small coast port about eighteen hours' steam from Hong-Kong.

The voyage was made in the Douglass Lapraik steamer *Kwangtung*, a staunch little boat under the command of Captain Pitman—one of the foremost of the famous coast skippers of those days. We arrived at Swatow in the early morning and I was fortunate enough to fall into the hospitable hands of Captain Cocker of the Chinese Revenue steamer *Ling Feng*. His kindness to me on that occasion ripened into a lifelong friendship only ended by his death, regretted by all, after long service with the Chinese Customs. The *Ling Feng* was known as the I.G.'s yacht. She was a trim little craft kept with all the cleanly beauty and cheerful discipline of a British warship.

Cocker—himself an ex-naval man—had attracted other ex-naval officers, one especially outstanding in my boyish eyes was Lieutenant Ring, a man of huge muscles and bearing the marks on his person of terrible wounds inflicted by a jealous samurai in a street adventure in Tokio. His life was saved by a Japanese woman stuffing his gaping wounds with soft paper pending the arrival of the Legation doctor some hours later.

After a hearty breakfast, Captain Cocker took me ashore to be introduced to my official Chief, the local Commissioner of Customs. We waited for him in a handsome drawing-room for some time, and at length

he came—a tall, scraggy Yankee of a most pronounced type. I did not know then that manners maketh *not* man in the new world, so was rather “put off” by the abruptness of his reception. It was still more unfortunate that on the way to the Custom House at Swatow in the Commissioner’s gig, a gorgeous six-oared galley, I asked him in all innocence, my own mind being full of the subject, if he knew Chinese. He evidently took umbrage at the question, and it was not until a few hours later that I learnt the extent of my *faux pas*. He was one of the early Customs Chiefs whose knowledge of the Chinese language had begun and ended with Wade’s preface. I could not know that, but of course his view was that the “darned Britisher” was trying to pull his leg. Once on shore and in the Custom House, I was duly introduced to the rest of the staff: The Senior Assistant, a red-headed middle-aged Irishman, an ex-ensign in the British Army and a relation of the I.G.; a Frenchman, also with red hair and a big red beard, and a German of the burly bourgeois type. I was given a miserable back room with no bathroom, but as I was young and eager such things were a trifle, and I soon shook down to local conditions. Being of a somewhat rare type in the Customs Service at that period, namely, an Englishman with French and German at his command, I naturally made both friends and enemies; but mutual perspiration is a great solvent, and on hot nights on the verandah petty jealousies are apt to melt. The event of the evening of my arrival was a dinner on board the American steamship *Kiushu*, a most extraordinary-looking old tub under the command of one Deville, a Franco-American. He proved a most genial host, and the ensign steered us all safely back to bed in the early hours of the morning. This was my first introduction to a “Jambarree,” an entertainment peculiar to Swatow, of which more anon.

Swatow suffered then, as it does now, from divided interests. The foreign settlement is on each side of

the harbour and separated by a mile or so of not always easily navigated tidal water. Consequently, social barriers had grown up. It was more "tony" to live on one side than on the other. We of the Customs were also divided. Our Chief, the Commissioner, lived on the "tony" side, while his four assistants dwelt over the Custom House amidst Chinese and business conditions.

Another social disability for dwellers on the Swatow side lay in the fact that the married people—mostly seniors—all dwelt on the opposite side at Kahchio.

Every now and then we were invited over to rather solemn dinner parties followed by whist, but as a rule the Swatowites had to shift for themselves in matters of social intercourse on a bachelor basis, with the inevitable result that the "Jambarree" spirit was ever present. Sometimes wearisomely so, card-playing—chiefly poker—was also much in vogue, while the night side of Chinese life was to be had for the asking all round us. It was a strange enough environment for white youths fresh from home. An enervating, thirsty climate, a very few visible moral restraints *plus* a great deal of good comradeship of an international nature, for in those days all white men on the coast held together and sank their separatist tendencies. Chinese and foreigners were the two broad racial distinctions. Taken as a whole there was very little animosity between the two.

The native merchants were mostly Canton men and imported, while the sons of the soil were the descendants of the stubborn race of hill-men who refused to shave their heads at the dictate of the Manchu conqueror and at that time wore a turban to conceal the disgrace they were at last compelled to submit to. The foreign community was made up by a preponderance of British, some Germans and Scandinavians, a few French and one or two Americans. It was lucky for us who came after that in the early pre-treaty days a man of light and leading had settled

himself in Swatow. Of all the men I have known in China the name and remarkable personality of Thomas Wills Richardson will always hold first place. A British merchant of the best Mercator type, well read and large visioned, he saw to it that the foundations of foreign trade in Swatow were well and truly laid.

The early Treaty Power Consuls—British and American—were also men who loved books, and their first and most lasting achievement was the little Club at Kahchio with its fine library of well-selected standard works.

Personally I owe a deep debt of gratitude to them. During the five years of my residence in Swatow many happy hours were spent amongst their books, which otherwise might have been hopelessly wasted.

I soon settled down to the work in the office, my business experiences in London making many things easy to me. I knew all about such "fearful fowl" (to an English schoolboy) as Bills of Lading, Invoices, Customs rules and regulations, and had besides a fair knowledge of commercial book-keeping; so I soon succeeded to the proud posts of port accountant and secretary to the Commissioner, functions which gave me a small den as a private office where I could have my Chinese books in a corner without fear of interruption. Truth to tell, the learning of the Mandarin dialect—obligatory on all Indoor Assistants in the Chinese Customs Service—was a matter of considerable difficulty in those days at Swatow. No Northern men of the teacher class existed in the port, and had it not been for the kindness of Professor H. A. Giles—then British Vice-Consul at Swatow—in allowing me to have the services of the Consulate writer, a native of Foochow, I should have had a still harder fight to acquire the four tones and the correct accent of the Court dialect. To this day I can recall the painful efforts to write with a Chinese pen, and how the perspiration poured off my hands in the long hot

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days and nights I sat manufacturing Chinese characters selected by the teacher and transcribed by him on thin paper neatly divided into half-inch squares. The pupil had to place tracing-paper over the sheet of characters within the squares and reproduce them by tracing. What made the matter more bitter for me was the knowledge that in most cases Customs beginners were either sent to Peking to study Chinese without the complication of six hours daily at office work, or sent to some Mandarin-speaking port where the language could be taken in "through the pores."

My local chiefs were continually changing—the American gave way to a Frenchman, who, in his turn, was succeeded by a Belfast Irishman, only to yield up office in a few months to the most revered of them all, the late Mr. Charles Hannen.

He was a Chief who endeared himself to juniors and seniors alike, and he did much to brighten our lives in and out of the office. My struggles with the language did not escape attention, and the Chief in Peking was approached several times to give "young King" a chance in a Mandarin-speaking port. But for five weary years there was no response, and it was not until my health broke down in 1878, after five summers in Swatow, that a transfer came. I was sent up to Kiukiang—an ancient city on the Yangtze, of which more anon. Up to that period I had very little personal experience of the Inspector General's "complex" and curious character. On my arrival in Swatow I had written him a letter of thanks for my appointment, and got in due course a reply full of useful advice as to what to do and what to avoid. Summing up, he wrote: "Take this advice not because it comes from the Inspector General, but because it is from a man who has spent twenty years in China. Reject it and in your diary of twenty years later you will write, 'What a fool I was not to take the Inspector General's advice.'"

A short digression is here necessary in order to

convey an adequate impression of the mentality of the great Inspector General. In the early 'Sixties my maternal uncle—the late Colonel Man Stuart, C.B., C.M.G.—had accepted service in China as Private Secretary to the first Inspector General of Customs—the late Mr. Horatio Nelson Lay—and on Mr. Lay's supersession, passed on to his successor, Mr. Hart, in a similar capacity, and eventually became a Commissioner of Chinese Customs. My uncle was a man brought up in the traditions of the British public service—both civil and military—and it was not long before he came up against the arbitrary methods of his new Chief. It has been a common conceit in the Service to describe Mr. Hart as a benevolent despot. Despot he certainly was, but his victims were rarely the objects of his benevolence.

So he and my uncle were at daggers drawn—unfortunately for me just at the time of my appearance in China. My first personal experience of my great Chief was in 1878 at Swatow, when he was touring the ports in one of the Revenue cruisers. We all went on board to pay our respects, I as the junior was the last to be presented. He inquired my name in an aside to the introducing secretary, shook hands and recalled the fact that he had known my father and some of my other relatives. The sea was rather rough, and as we were going over the side he inquired with a sarcastic smile, "Can you swim?" I replied off-hand, "Oh yes, all my life." It was an ill-advised reply, but I did not know that Robert Hart hated all men of athletic tendencies and accomplishments, a peculiarity carried to such extent as to forbid all games to his son at Harrow. Thus my start was inauspicious. It was reported that after the interview the great man remarked "Young King is very like Man," referring to my uncle, his late secretary.

From his long sojourn in China and his intimate relations with all phases of Chinese life it was known that the Inspector General, consciously or uncon-

sciously, had a tendency to employ Chinese methods. One way is to make the sins of the father felt by the children. My case was in no way exceptional, but unfortunately for me the great I.G. viewed me for years through the film of his irritation with my uncle "Jack" Man (Stuart).

Another of the great man's characteristics was his habit of only taking active steps against people he disliked when quite sure they could not retaliate. With his British employees he always had a free hand, and could treat them well or badly just as he pleased.

It was not so with the American and European members of the Customs Service. Watchful Consuls at the ports and jealous Plenipotentiaries at Peking saw to it that their nationals got their due in the matter of promotion—and even sometimes rather more. But British representatives—Ministers and Consuls alike—exercised from the very first days a "self-denying ordinance" in regard to interference with the internal concerns of the Customs Service, which, whatever its ethical beauty, in practice too often resulted in unredressed wrongs to the British employees.

At this point I rise as it were to make a personal explanation, since I should not wish it to be thought for a moment I am that unhappy mortal, a man with a grievance. Far be that from me, but it is wellnigh impossible to deal at all adequately with the subject unless some references to individual experiences be permitted. This must be my excuse for sometimes calling myself as a witness to a record which is an attempt to psycho-analyse a "complex" that, for all its great qualities, was sadly marred by temperamental defects. Robert Hart did not always remember Emerson's grim advice: "If you would not be known to do anything, never do it."

Though many British had to suffer for it, there is a touch of humour in the fact that when other nationals surveyed Robert Hart's want of favour towards his own people they were deeply impressed by his "impar-

tiality," and no doubt his attitude—cruelly hard on some British victims—actually adorned and consolidated the British Headship !

Having relieved my conscience and, I hope, made my intentions clear by this brief explanation, let me take up the threads of the early days at Swatow. I have enumerated the better elements there. They shone out by their rarity as well as by their virtue. Others were equally conspicuous in an opposite sense. There was the leading German merchant, Mr. Diercks. He had struggled along for a score of years and more on the Swatow side of the harbour with a Chinese wife and numerous progeny. Suddenly, owing to the failure of the beet crop in Europe, Swatow sugar came into huge demand. Our German friend took Fortune at the flood, and dollars came rolling in. The man changed with his fortunes. From a bitter recluse, living in semi-Chinese style, he blossomed into a Merchant Prince of the Hong-Kong (Teutonic) variety. He built a fine house and was lavish in his hospitality to the few people in the place who had not in his previous state of existence incurred his undying hatred.

Personally I was not a favourite, as I was never a hard drinker or a willing gambler. He distrusted me too as an Englander who spoke German and knew more about the Vaterland than he did.

The sequel was a sad one. He conceived the ambition of "going home," a not unusual manifestation under similar circumstances. As a matter of fact, owing to the lapse of time, he had no home except in Swatow, but I recall our farewell conversation. "I shall go to Paris, and what dinners I shall have there with ten thousand golden sovereigns in the Hong-Kong and Shanghai Bank to back me up." Alas ! for the futility of human visions. He died of heart failure on the voyage to the home that was never to be his.

It was a curious feature of Swatow life at that

time that the foreign community was sharply divided between very young and middle-aged men. I remember good Mrs. Richardson—bless her kind heart for all she did for us unregenerate youngsters—once saying pathetically, “Why do you call Mr. Richardson old? He is only forty years of age.” She was American born and did not know that “old Richardson” was a term of endearment from the British youths, who hate to wear their hearts upon their sleeves. For all that, the cleavage between young and middle-aged was very marked—one reason being, I suppose, that we were all in some way or other dependent on our seniors. It is true we went our own way and did plenty of foolish and foolhardy things without their co-operation, although perhaps with more sneaking admiration than they cared to admit, but in the end any young man not in society was perilously near becoming a pariah. Of such “pariahs” there were not a few, and not all young.

One extraordinary individual, about whose origin I often marvelled, came suddenly from Hong-Kong. Rumour was that he had found a British colony no longer suitable, and yearned for the more untrammelled life of a Chinese port where the Ten Commandments were in as little evidence as a uniformed policeman.

Be that as it may, he came and established himself in a Chinese house in the native town. He was a man of varied parts and quite a brilliant conversationalist. One night, when deeper than usual in his cups, he gave us extracts from R.C. Divine Service in a voice and fidelity to detail which suggested either a renegade priest or a Stonyhurst failure. Needless to say, his money soon gave out and he disappeared before evil communications had much chance to corrupt what was left of our good (moral) manners. Another type was maritime, a noted runner-down of Chinese smugglers and pirates. A little swarthy man, whose foreign-type gunboat under the Chinese flag

had brought many shekels into the Treasury at Canton. When he came to us his course was nearly run, but I remember him as the possessor (not unshared by others, as is sometimes the case elsewhere than in China) of one of the handsomest Chinese damsels I had seen before or since.

She was a woman of character and daring too, for he was a dangerous man in his cups—any discovery of infidelity might have meant disfigurement if not death.

In those days the only "social" intercourse between Chinese and foreigners was conducted by women of the "Mui-tsai" class. In justice it must be recalled that the Chinese housekeeper often did a good deal to keep her temporary lord and master straight, especially in matters of drink, or tendency to stray off to less supervised and possibly dangerous-to-health pastures. Happily, all this is changed and gone for ever. The number of marriageable girls of his own race all over China gives no excuse to a white man seeking a helpmeet to risk entangling alliances with native blood; but as a temporary measure in the old dark days—well, perhaps better not to hazard an opinion.

Our chief outdoor sport in both summer and winter—latter only noticeable for one, or at the most two months in the year—was cricket, and our gala days the not infrequent arrival of a British gunboat. Then jollity and good-fellowship reigned and a thermometer of 98° in the shade did not prevent good cricket and lots of beer going together. It was open house with all the married seniors, and their dames came to look on in all the glory of Chinese reproductions of the latest Paris fashions.

Later in the night the Messes held high revel, and if a tin kettle did occasionally get hoisted on a Consular flagstaff or a chapel bell had to be retrieved from the bed of the harbour, no questions were asked, and no one was a penny the worse.

In the brief cold-weather months the mud flats of the Han river—the continuation of the harbour—swarmed with wild-fowl, geese, ducks, and teal, the first-named, very difficult to get, were the principal quarry, but snipe and plover—gold and grey—were also to be had. One convention amongst ourselves deserves record. We bound ourselves not to use any gun of larger calibre than a 12 bore. Buck shot in a wire cartridge could dispose of the larger birds and the duck and teal were best dealt with by No. 4 shot. Of course, we had only black powder and no “choke-bores,” but bags were plentiful, and there was no needless and indiscriminate slaughter. Good pheasant-shooting was also to be had in the not-far-distant hill country. The commodious “paper boats,” so called because their downward freight was the coarse Chinese paper for which Swatow was famous, made most roomy houseboats, taking a camp bedstead and tables and chairs in their freight space. The Chinese crew under a Lowdah—a very Napoleon—propelled the craft with long poles on a narrow plank gangway on each side. They talked and cooked, worked and sang, cheerily and continuously, with the hope of a whiff of the opium pipe to induce sleep and pleasant dreams when once snugly at rest beneath the deck in a two-foot deep space between it and the keel. Good sporting dogs were rare, as “worms-in-the-heart” in his favourite dog often goes far to break the heart of his owner. One curly-coated brown Irish retriever lives in my memory, and I warrant does too in the recollection of his owner, my lifelong friend “Bob” Hill. Old “Trusty” was an extraordinary “all-round” dog. He must have had something of the setter in his composition, as he could put up and, of course, retrieve a pheasant, if occasion required.

But what was one dog among so many sportsmen! The rest of us had to be content with human substitutes. For finding and retrieving a wounded

bird the coxswain of our Customs Mess gig had a port-wide reputation.

He and his crew were as staunch as steel, and many a time when storms were threatening brought us safe home by dint of sheer pluck and sticking to it. It was an ill day when cholera struck him down. As we stood by his poor livid clay the words of the old song, "His virtues were most rare," found an echo in all our hearts.

I can say from my heart that, in a wide experience in all parts of China over a long period, I have come across few cases of bad faith in a properly treated Chinese servant. On the contrary, my wife and I and five of our seven children have much to be grateful for in the unswerving loyalty of our Chinese servant friends. May each and all of them prosper as they have deserved, have long life, enough money, and filial children.

CHAPTER III

South China life and habits in the early 'Seventies—The old Glengyle and opium at Hong-Kong—An eccentric British Consul and other local celebrities—Captain Palmer, Thomas Marsh Brown, and the "Peng-chow-hoi"—The Grand Amalgamated Jambarree Company prospectus.

SOUTH CHINA LIFE was then all of a pattern. Breakfast, tea, or coffee, and an egg—each man on the verandah or in his bedroom.

Tiffin at noon in the mess-room, preceded by the inevitable and noxious cold drink in cocktail shape. Tiffin was quite a substantial meal, the feature being "spatch-cock" chicken. We had no ice. Any meat had to be quickly cooked and eaten, and could only be got from the good-natured skippers of visiting steamers.

Office hours in the Customs were ten to four. A cup of tea also served on the verandah to the consumer lying in a long cane chair helped to tone up the system for the evening exercises. Sometimes, when credit was more plentiful than reason, a "hsiao-ping-tzu" anglice, a small bottle of champagne, from the cool depths of the Club well, was substituted for the tea and generally tossed for. The chit system was in full swing and the "end of the month" troubled only a few.

Dinner was late—eight to half-past as a rule. White linen mess jackets and duck trousers—the dandies with red sashes—were mostly worn. Sherry, claret and soda, and bottled beer were generally drunk at table, with whisky and soda afterwards—sometimes, when card-playing was in vogue, deep into the night. Dinner was necessarily largely "metallic."

"METALLIC MEALS"

Tinned soup, tinned fish, tinned meat, tinned vegetables, and Christmas tinned plum pudding.

A local poet in Singapore once wrote a melancholy little ditty entitled "Metallic Meals." The vivid sidelight thus shed on the white man's burden in matters comestible was true of all places in the East until the advent of cold storage. Tinned sausages were the great stand-by in those days, served with green peas (also from a tin). No wonder the white man's digestion not seldom failed him after years of exclusive feeding on chicken and tins, so much so that to offer such a diet to a returned Eastern in London would be like a red rag to a bull.

"Tiffin"—no one spoke of luncheon in those days—at 12 noon was also a great institution, and on Sunday lasted very often until late in the afternoon.

It was followed—especially on Sundays—by country walks and rides. On the Kahchio side the hills of decomposed granite afforded rough but exhilarating walking, with fine views over the surrounding country.

On the Swatow side was a fine sandy beach, and various devious little bridle-paths leading to the villages and eventually to the foothills of the Chao-Chow-foo district.

But the great week-end place in summer was Double Island, at the entrance to the harbour, or rather the branch of the sea on which Swatow is situated.

The centre of social life there was the Masu Retreat Club, a commodious bungalow on a shoulder of the hill above the bathing beach. There was no particular furniture in the rooms. Camp beds were pitched anywhere—inside or on the spacious verandahs. Fish was the principal fare, brought up in great variety fresh from the ocean. A particularly toothsome morsel was rock cod served as only a Chinese cook knows how. Some of us essayed to fish with a line off the rocks—an amusement generally barren of

any tangible results. Drinks were kept cool in a deep well and much enjoyed between and at all meals.

Double Island at that time was the home of the Swatow pilots—a community unique in its way. Limited in number, and very tenacious of its supposed rights to keep out all outsiders, the pilot body consisted of six ancient navigators of various nationalities. The most outstanding—because of superior education—was one Frewen, the Harbour Pilot. He claimed to be a vegetarian, although report said that in emergencies, and such times most often have come his way, he would eat “most anything.” But from whatever reason he was a man of most extraordinary physical endurance—one who could walk for miles exposed to a blazing sun calculated to lay an ordinary white man low at short notice.

At one time he was in opposition to the pilot body on Double Island and would frequently walk to lonely points on the coast to intercept incoming vessels before their arrival at the pilot cruising-ground.

As a Free-thinker, a total abstainer and a vegetarian he did not fit in with any section of Swatow thought, and I often wondered what sort of a man he really was.

Outwardly he was stand-offish and unapproachable, and apparently he had no use for anybody in the community. I was young then, but since have often wondered what he found to think about in his long walks by day and night over those lonely hills. The other six were also curious. One—a haggard, wild-looking man probably of Platt-Deutsch origin—was reputed to live on “Hollands” only; but he was a lightning pilot, knew every ocean current in his neighbourhood, and never handled a ship better than when in a condition that, had he been a modern taxi-driver, would have landed him in gaol.

In the good old days, i.e. from the opening of the port in 1861 to the early 'Seventies, the coast trade was largely served by “wind-jammers”—handy little

British, German, and Scandinavian barques of about 600 tons capacity.

They brought peas and bean cake in bulk from Chefoo and Newchwang, and took back full cargoes of Swatow raw sugar. It was a trade that suited all parties in the conditions then obtaining.

The Chinese charterer liked a ship all his own with practically unlimited "lay days" at both ends of the line, and a long stay in port was never disagreeable to the skipper. Many were family ships with women and girls on board who could take a hand at the helm should occasion require.

The ship chandlers also liked the trade which the ships brought them, and many are the stories told of private bargains in which a suit of sails camouflaged suits of another sort, never unwelcome to a skipper on twenty-five thalers a month aus Hamburg.

In the 'Sixties quite a fleet of sailing vessels under foreign flags were regular coasters at Swatow, but gradually their number diminished year by year until the whole trade fell to the cheap steamers with which the great British firm of Butterfield and Swire made their first bid for the coast trade.

But steamers were not all of the cheap sort. The paddle-wheeler *Glengyle*, skippered by the well-known Captain Martin, will long remain in the memory of anybody who ever trod her magnificent decks, and it was a sad day for all of us in Swatow when she failed to appear one morning at her scheduled time. There was no S.O.S. then, but the appearance of her boats in the early evening told the sad tale.

By an error in navigation on the part of a man who had temporarily replaced Captain Martin for the round trip—Shanghai, Swatow—the good ship struck on Three Chimney Bluff in broad daylight, and sank shortly afterwards in deep water. The unhappy temporary captain locked himself into his state-room and perished with the ship, and there was a considerable loss of life amongst the native passengers.

IN THE CHINESE CUSTOMS SERVICE

The Chief Engineer, Mr. Law, a fine old Scot, much beloved by all who knew him, was saved by one of his Chinese firemen, who lugged him into a boat by the long beard for which he was famous in addition to his other virtues. A pleasant tribute to his popularity as "Chief," and also illustrative of the fact that deep-sea Chinese sailors are free from the prejudice against saving a drowning man commonly attributed to their long-shore and riverine brethren.

The *Glengyle* was a vessel with a history. In the old opium days at Hong-Kong she left Calcutta a day *after* the Indian Mail and arrived outside Hong-Kong a day or so before her and remained in hiding near the Lye-Moon Pass. Her first mate—disguised as a Chinese—landed alone, and delivered Mail advices to the firm that owned her. When the Indian Mail had arrived and the letters were distributed in the usual way, the *Glengyle* also came into port and duly registered her arrival. Meanwhile the "Beatipossidentes" of the latest news had been enabled to anticipate, "intelligently anticipate," market conditions, very much to their own benefit. She was a beautifully built ship and her "yacht-like" lines gave her what in those days was very great speed—of course she carried no heavy cargo. But the installation of telegraphic communication spoilt her little game, and she sank to the level of the ordinary coast boat. Regrets at her loss were more sentimental than real, as she was an expensive boat to run and for her size a small carrier. Still her anchor chains and deck fittings were a sight fit for the gods, and no wonder her loss nearly broke Captain Martin's heart. Peace be to her bones 'neath the China Sea!

We were happy in our old-time Consuls: R. J. Forrest and his charming wife; the learned, but always ready for a lark, "Tommy Watters"; last, but not least, that extraordinary individual, the late William Gregory.

My first introduction to him was in the garden of

the British Consulate. His usual garb, so report said, was pyjamas, in the good old Formosan style, but he was evidently expecting a Chinese official call, so had hurriedly dressed for the occasion.

I remember how quaint he looked, in a strange mixture of bed-clothes and uniform. He was a fat "tubby" little man and abhorred tight clothes, so his unfastened tunic displaced a sleeping-shirt hanging out at the waist over a black leather belt that somewhat vaguely kept in position a pair of rather tumbly white duck trousers.

But he was quite *maître-de-lui* and shed on me the benevolent smile with which he always greeted the younger generation. He had a fascinating falsetto note in his voice, and some curious mannerisms and phrases. But he was a man of wide reading and one learnt to beware of being squashed flat when, apropos of some unwary statement, he would say in his funny squeaky voice: "Ah, let me see now. Would it be strictly correct to say," etc., etc., etc. "Old Richardson," who also dearly loved to "argy," used to take cover at once.

"Damn you, Gregory, when you start like that I always know I'm wrong."

In China, under extra-territoriality, Consuls act also as District Judges. I was once an Assessor—with another British youth—in Consul Gregory's Court. The case was of the usual "mixed" order, Chinese Plaintiff and British Defendant. All evidence had thus to be taken in both languages.

At the start there was an initial difficulty. The Court's official Chinese was the Mandarin dialect with which the Chinese Plaintiff was totally unacquainted, while the British Defendant knew no Chinese at all except perhaps a few swear words unsuitable for Court use.

Gregory's Chinese was as peculiar as the rest of him, and was only understandable by one person besides himself, namely his Chinese private teacher,

a wonderful derelict old Chinese "Hsien-Shêng," who always sat with him. So the Court on this occasion spoke a Chinese only understood by itself, and its *alter ego*, the old Hsien-Shêng. A witness said something in Swatow Chinese—but in order to penetrate to the ear of the Court, it had to pass through several processes. First into English for the benefit of the British Defendant, then from English into ordinary Mandarin which the derelict understood well enough, and finally, in order to reach the ear of the Presiding Judge, into the archaic dialect of Chinese of that officer, which he defended as the one true and unadulterated form of Chinese speech. His witty assistant, Playfair, always held that "Gregory's Chinese" was a "compound," the result of trying to pronounce a word from *Williams' Chinese Dictionary* by the light of all the "alternatives" given in that miscellany of exasperating explanation.

Be that as it may, in the result on a hot afternoon something very different from the original deposition reached the ear of the Court. The Court naturally criticized, and the whole process had to be gone through again, but backwards.

Then the cicadas were very troublesome and disturbed the "Court" by their ceaseless chatter in the garden. The Consular boatmen with long bamboos had to be sent for to compel their withdrawal from the neighbourhood of the Court. With all these conflicting circumstances it is needless to say we did not get much "forradder" with the case, and the Court eventually adjourned for the day and a much needed cup of tea. On one occasion the Assessors, in reply to the Judge's invitation, ventured to make a suggestion. I remember it was a very good one and Playfair, from his seat below the Bench, secretly applauded it. But it had no prosperity in the ear of justice. Gregory listened for a moment and then said, "Um, ha, I don't agree with you." Luckily, a particularly vigorous cicada note covered our con-

fusion and directed the wrath of the Judge into another channel.

Many are the yarns told of old Gregory. He was the despair of all who had business to transact, but much loved by those who only knew him as a friend. He retired in due course and was a very happy and contented figure in the Reading Room of the British Museum for many years after.

Consul Forrest was a man of a different stamp altogether. In his youth he had ridden alone into the "T'ai-p'ing" camp outside Canton and so saved a situation pregnant with danger to foreign lives. Long service and the climate were beginning to tell on him when he came to Swatow. His hands often trembled nervously, but all the same he was a marvellously steady shot and rarely missed a wild pigeon—no mean test.

He was an easy-going man and his one *bête noire* was a possible visit from Hong-Kong of an Admiral, or a Governor, which would necessitate going on board in a cocked hat and brass-bound clothes.

The unregenerate youth determined to play on this idiosyncrasy, and towards the end of March spread rumours of an impending visit of the British Admiral. It worried Forrest not a little—he never left the Club without fervently consigning all such visitants to a place even hotter than the Club Bar. Every morning he would turn out on his verandah and anxiously scan the Customs Flag Staff to see if the three black cones—denoting a man-of-war outside—were hanging from its southern yard arm. One day, in the early morning, the fatal sign was there right enough. Loud were the lamentations of the Consul when discussing in the Club the possibility that after all it might not be a British man-of-war. The conspirators combated this by pointing out that anything but a ship of war with the White Ensign was an extremely unlikely event.

Still there was no flag, only the three black balls. What could have happened? Someone suggested

that the ship might have grounded somewhere outside, and in that case would be expecting relief in person from the British Consul. Just as he was leaving the Club to take extreme measures, up went the British flag with the man-of-war pennant. No hope now, it must be the Admiral. The unhappy man ordered away his gig and was proceeding along the jetty in full rig when a note from Mrs. Forrest, who was in the plot, reached him. "You dear old goose, don't you know to-day is the 1st of April?" Forrest went home, and forgave the joke in the happy relief that it was not an Admiral after all.

At the Club Bar later on, it was decided to drown the lie *nem. con.*, Consul assisting.

The outstanding American Consuls of my day were Wingate and another whose name need not be recorded.

The former, a scholarly man of deep religious convictions, who contributed largely to a wise selection of books for the Club Library. The latter was a typical political selection. He lives in my recollection as a very entertaining man after dinner, and his rendering of a supposed oration by Daniel Webster—also after dinner—belonged to the type of stories that cannot be told to ladies.

Beyond the hero of "the few remaining bricks" story there were comparatively few American missionaries in Swatow in the 'Seventies; but one outstanding figure, Miss Field—a large woman both in mind and body, and whose literary fame has lasted—must here be chronicled. Consul Gregory worshipped at her shrine and we were all looking forward to and speculating upon the time, place and manner of his proposal. Several moonlight picnics seem to promise well, but nothing transpired. The pity of it. She would have appreciated the old scholar, and cleaned him up as well. Amongst the English missionaries Dr. Gibson, a Scot, stands pre-eminent. He was just a beginner in those days, but soon made his mark

both as a Chinese scholar and earnest worker. It is a pity his creed was uncompromising and narrow, but "wide views," including cinemas in churches, "were not" in his day.

Most people kept "cold missionary" on the side-board for consumption when other topics failed, and there was little sympathy or understanding on either side. As far as I was personally concerned, my "high-church" upbringing had suffered somewhat by the rationalism of good Dr. Heinrich of Dresden, but neither the one nor the other inclined me much to the fierce denunciations of all and sundry—including the vast majority of the Chinese amongst whom we lived—then in vogue in Protestant missionary circles. How different were the French Missionary Fathers—living celibate and alone—in the Chinese villages of the district. For them to die was truly gain—paradise in exchange for the sordid surroundings of their daily lives amongst the common people!

The foreign community in Swatow had little to do with the local Chinese of good standing, and, as a matter of fact, there were not very many Chinese of good standing resident in the place. The Hoppo, or head of the Customs at Canton, was represented in Swatow by a deputy of low rank, and the Tao-tai, or Intendant of Circuit, resided in the prefectural city of Chao-chow-fu, a considerable distance inland. Swatow had a bad name amongst Chinese officials. The people were in clans and very impatient of central control. Brigandage was rife and "hold-ups" of cargo boats only avoided by payment of ransom to the local usurper.

The Peking Government acted at last, and the Viceroy at Canton deputed one General Fang to pacify the district. Fang soon "made good." He knew the district well, and having an ample force of non-local soldiers at his command, was able to put in action the drastic methods of Chinese conquerors. His plans

were simple and effective, and he had evidently thoroughly digested the Chinese maxim that "to attain what is far you must start from what is near."

He started from the nearest village, surrounded it at night and slaughtered all the inhabitants, and so on to the next until the people were "pacified." The lesson was severe but served, and the Emperor's writ soon began to run again. I remember the little man well, with his cruel ferret eyes and "off with his head" expression.

One heard many tales of the pirates both on sea and land, and the China Sea, especially round Hong-Kong, Canton, and Macao, had a sufficiently evil reputation as the hunting-ground of sea-robbers. Quite apart from the Customs Staff under the Inspector General, both the "Hoppo" and the Viceroy at Canton maintained gunboats of foreign type, with foreign captains and officers to aid in their suppression. The most famous of them was the *Pêng-chow-hoi*, Captain Palmer, a fine specimen of the old-type British sailor. He came into Swatow one night and we were all invited on board. From stem to stern a fighting ship, her 'tween decks fairly bristled with small-arms of modern type, which her Chinese crew knew well how to use. On that occasion the late Thomas Marsh Brown was on board, at that time the terror of all Chinese smugglers and pirates. He was a slenderly built man with hawk-like eyes and a general bird-of-prey expression. He must have possessed an extraordinary, and at that time most unusual (for a non-Chinese), mastery of the Cantonese dialect, especially of the expletives with which the natives of the City of Rams so plentifully garnish their conversation.

His dark complexion was also no doubt an aid, and he was wont to visit the opium divans, disguised as a Chinese at Canton, especially those establishments patronized by the smugglers and pirates, and where

most of their enterprises were discussed and planned, and was so enabled to plan his own counter-measures.

He was bold in action as well—and after chasing in a gunboat heavily armed pirate craft, he would pursue in shoal water in a gig, something in the style of gallant old Admiral Keppel at Canton in 1857. On one of these occasions he was severely wounded in the back—due, he said, to a failure in nerve on the part of his coxswain. Brown's invariable custom when boarding was to keep the bow on against the enemy for two reasons—first, that it presented a narrower target and, secondly, that it destroyed the *moral* of the attacked. Invariably their fire slackened as the foreign boat drew nearer, until the last act of abandoning ship by leaping overboard, leaving all their loot behind. Later in life Thomas Marsh Brown joined up with the Imperial Maritime Customs, and in due course retired to enjoy the rest of his life on a Californian fruit ranch. On his arrival there the local Chinese flocked to him, and assured him that, with or without return, his land should never lack labour. So great was his reputation, and so high did he stand in the regard of the Cantonese, that their fellow provincials in California were proud to do him honour without reward.

Unfortunately life and leisure were not to be his lot. Broken down both in mind and body, Thomas Marsh Brown did not long survive to enjoy the fruits of his labours, and, equally unfortunately for those who came after, left behind, as far as I know, no record of his adventurous life in the Canton Delta, which might well have inspired a Conrad or a Stevenson.

But my time at Swatow was running short and on a very hot afternoon at the end of 1878 I found myself on one of the new Butterfield and Swire coast boats, *en route, via* Amoy and Shanghai, for my new port of Kiukiang on the Yangtsze River. I was glad enough to leave—although friendships made there

have lasted good and true until this present year of grace.

Of Hong-Kong and Amoy I had also grateful memories of kindness shown, especially at the latter place—both from my Customs colleagues and Drs. Rennie and Patrick Manson.

On the occasion of one visit I came up sick from Swatow with a terribly inflamed eye. The case had been misunderstood locally, but Manson divined in a moment the *causa causans* of my misery. After careful examination through a magnifying glass he held the offending eye open while Rennie swept over it with a camel's hair. Out came a tiny iron filing that had been sticking in the iris !

I have cherished their memories ever since, and years afterwards in London was again indebted to "Pat Manson," who descended for the sake of an old friend from his five-guineas-a-visit eminence and got me through an abscess in the jaw with complications, thus saving me once more.

Truly a great man as well as a great doctor. Like most doctors he did not always practise what he preached, and I remember on one occasion, after an eloquent exhortation against iced drinks on an empty stomach, seeing him empty almost at a draught a long glass, and they were long, of icy-cold beer just before sitting down to tiffin. He beamed on us all and said, "You young fellows mustn't do that." But he could, thanks to his tough Aberdonian ancestry, and thirst was allowable enough in a man who had probably been hunting the *filaria sanguinis hominis* since early dawn.

But not all could do what he did with impunity. Years after my Swatow days were only a memory, I was being shaved in Polite's establishment at Shanghai and caught sight of a face in the glass opposite. It came nearer and leant over me, and a voice said : "Why, it's King," and added, "Ah, you never drank as much as the rest of us." It was

Deville, the "slaver captain" of the old *Kiushu*, but a strangely altered Deville, and one not far from his end. The voice so full of vain regret, but still with a touch of pride in the prowess of the past, and the changed appearance of the man, made a deep impression on me and gave me "furiously to think" as well. Before leaving the subject of Swatow mention should be made of one of the most characteristic of its social features in the days that have gone by.

This was the Jambarree Club, and by a lucky chance I am able to produce for the instruction of old and young alike a copy of its original prospectus. Its author, the late Mr. Charles Hannen, has only recently "passed over" at the ripe age of ninety years.

He was, of course, never an "active" member of the Club, but was sympathetic, as was his nature to be, with the harmless vagaries of the younger generation.

His gentle satire did, I think, more to show us the un wisdom of our ways than was ever effected by the "drawing away" of skirts and general reprobation indulged in by the missionaries. The names of the "office-bearers" are but thinly disguised, and at this length of time, although most of them I am pleased to note are still with us, it may be permissible to reveal their real selves in this faithful record. For the chairman, R. H. Mountain read, R. H. Hill, formerly a director of the Hong-Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation. The Secretary, who was returning home "as much for the repair of his own as the Company's plant," is Comte d'Arnoux—at that time a member of our Customs Mess, but who has since played a big part in Franco-Turkish finance. My recollections of him are "a fine rider and a staunch friend." His Gallic verve was never at fault, and at a Chinese dinner he could generally see his hosts "under the table," or carried helpless home.

"Eagle-eyed" Shott, the Medical Officer, was the

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SECRETARY

GOLIATH P. SAUL, Esq.

PROSPECTUS.

The object of this company is to supply the public with pure and unadulterated Jambarree, in greater quantity, and at their own doors. Hitherto the supply has been limited, and confined to those living in the immediate neighbourhood of the factory. For the future, care will be taken that all shall be enabled to enjoy the luxury of the far-famed Jambarree, no matter at what distance their residence may be situated.

For the present, and during the repairs of the company's premises, the business will be carried on at the residence of the Director who has kindly placed his house, furniture, crockery, glass and garden railings at the disposal of the company.

One of the Committee of the Direction has just returned from visiting a neighbouring port where he has secured several valuable additions to the company's plant. Amongst others, a new specimen of the "Cod-liver-Oil" plant.

Later, Monsieur NOUDAR is repairing to Paris, as well for the purpose of having some of his own and the company's Jambarree machinery put in thorough repair, much needed, after the strain upon it consequent on the extraordinary demand for the supply of our surveying ships and the navy generally, as to acquaint himself with the latest improvements in Jambarree—such as are likely to be seen on the occasion of the Exhibition to be held in that city.

For further particulars, apply on the premises, between 11 P.M. and 2 A.M. After that at H. B. M. Gsol.

ANALYSIS OF JAMBARREE

BY

Professor Eagle I. Shott.

I have analysed a sample of Jambarree furnished me on the night of, the—stant and found it to contain

75 parts.....	Alcohol
24 ".....	Vox Humana.
1 ".....	Water.
<hr/>	
100	

EAGLE I. SHOTT,
Professor

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"We consider Jambarree to be a certain cure for deafness. The singing in the ears in the morning is a sign the dose is excessive; it should then be discontinued."

"LANCET."

TESTIMONIALS.

To the Director

No. 7184

DEAR SIR,

JAMBARREE Co. (UN) LIMITED,

I beg to state that whereas my wife and I have suffered for a considerable time from a disease the chief indications of which were a drooping of the eyelids, attacking us nightly at about 11 o'clock, and a general lassitude and indisposition to move about—on trying one dose of your Jambarree mixture, the eyelids were at once raised, and remained so during the whole night—the hair of the head, even, gathered enough vigour to stand on end—whilst, in place of the indisposition to move, we both rushed out at our back door, and up the hill to the Doctor's house. We found one dose quite enough.

It may not be altogether irrelevant to mention that we are leaving the neighbourhood—but, before doing so think it right to record our opinions as above.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your's wakefully,

R. J. WOODS,

Consult

To the Director

No. 8960

SIR,

JAMBARREE Co. (UN) LIMITED,

Having suffered for some time from nervous fears, fancies and hallucinations; amongst others that I had seen the devil, I was induced to try your Jambaaree;—after one dose taken on the night of Saint Andrew's day, last, these fancies, &c., were dispelled, and in their place came the calm, composing and settled conviction that I had both seen and heard him (the Deville). You are at liberty to make what use you like of this.

I am, Sir,

Your's sincerely,

J. R. GOODBOY,

The Doctor

IN THE CHINESE CUSTOMS SERVICE

late Dr. E. I. Scott, who with his elder brother ran the Medical work at Swatow. He was a genial, clever Irishman, who on his retirement had no difficulty in building up a fine practice in the western suburb of Brighton, where he died greatly regretted some years ago. His widow, a charming woman, survives him and will long live in our memories of Swatow as a gracious lady who did much "to soften our manners" if not our hearts. Looking back on it all now, after a vista of more than forty-five years, the things that have survived—at least in memory—are the good-fellowship of the juniors and the kindly tolerance of the seniors in those days of "Wein, Weib und Gesang."

CHAPTER IV

My second port, Kiukiang, 1878-79—The Lushan and its wondrous surroundings—A Yangtze flood—An uncongenial Chief—Confidential Reports on Staff—Amenities of buying chinaware—Some celebrities in the Tea Trade—Archibald Little and others—I am transferred to Chefoo, 1879-81—Meet Chinese Gordon—His opinion of Robert Hart's little ways—Marriage—Apply for home leave and am appointed to the London Office, 1881.

AFTER A BRIEF STAY in Shanghai—my first visit to the Emporium of the East—I found myself on board a river steamer bound for Kiukiang, whither I had been transferred on account of “the exigencies of the Service necessitating”—the euphemism under which the great I.G. veiled his official mandates.

This was in December 1878. In those days there was no Wuhu, so the only way port was Chinkiang. The lower Yangtze is not particularly beautiful and one cannot enthuse much on the scenery of the Lang Shan crossing, but higher up in the Lushan country “every prospect pleases.” The city of Kiukiang is marvellously situated in the Lushan foothills, with a grand panorama of mountains, plain and river. I was only destined to spend some eight months there, but for me they were eventful enough. While at Swatow I had received three promotions, rather a “record,” as the phenomenal advancement which obtained in the first years of the Inspectorate General had long ceased for the rank and file. My new Chief was an American—a man of parts but too fond of power. This latter quality was his eventual ruin. Still young himself and ranking only as “Assistant-in-charge,”

he had little sympathy with his staff and never commanded either their respect or love. His one idea was self-assertion, and to this end he was hostile to the men under him and ever strove to belittle them. This was an unpleasing quality in any case, but in the Customs with a Chief such as Robert Hart, who "never forgot a bad report" although he might overlook a good one, it was a positive danger. I was the first to suffer, as I was Senior Assistant and nearest to the Chief. Men junior to me in the Service began to be placed above me, and it was not until years afterwards that the "snake in the grass" lay revealed. The *Confidential Report on Staff*, sent in those days every six months to Peking by the local Commissioners, was a terrific engine of destruction to the budding reputations of many a youngster, though, of course, Robert Hart only acted on them if he wanted to.

However, there were compensations. My one messmate—a charming little Frenchman of noble birth—was a most sympathetic companion. Together on horseback we explored the city and its surroundings, our special fun being found in the china-ware shops and on the parade ground where the old-time "Brave" practised "horse" and "foot" archery amidst most picturesque scenery. Saturday-to-Monday excursions to the Customs Bungalow a little way up the Lushan range were a great resource. Lovely views, cool nights, and a natural bathing pool of crystal water were the outstanding features of those days of delight. The Bund at Kiukiang on a summer's night was a fearsome experience. The whole community—some fourteen persons or so in the Club—would lie breathless in long chairs on the tennis lawn, waiting for the arrival of the "up-steamer" from Shanghai that brought us mails and provisions. When the faint beat of the engines could first be distinguished far down the Kiukiang Reach we were once more alive to the outside world that in the intervals seemed so

far off and remote. Travellers—but not many—came to Kiukiang, and I remember one delightful man, a botanical collector from Veitch of Chelsea. I accompanied him in a trip in the Lushan. It was a case of “Eyes and no eyes,” with me as the no-eye hero of that immortal tale. No blade of grass or wayside herb escaped the eagle glance of my companion. His speciality was ferns, of which he found many rare (and in one case previously unknown) specimens. He was a charming companion to boot, and when the steamer took him away he left a blank indeed behind. Why are not English boys trained to know and love Nature? At Haileybury our botanical knowledge was confined to a Sunday display of “Tea-roses” from Hertford Heath in our button-holes!

The summer of 1879 was marked by a Yangtze flood. The water lapped over the Kiukiang Bund, and soon we had to do our visiting over planks or in sampans. Incidentally it, too, had compensations, for the whole plain was flooded to a depth of a few feet and provided a wide expanse of safe water for sailing and rowing. It was grand to crowd on all sail and scud over the plains in an imported Thames-side wherry, or paddle one's own canoe over the inundated wastes. I can remember to this day the lights and shades on the Lushan hills as the sun faded gradually from rocky crests to the dark foliage of the undulating foothills.

One fine day towards the end of September 1879, “service exigencies” once more necessitated my transfer, this time to Chefoo—a seaside port some five hundred miles north of Shanghai. All things considered I was not sorry. Kiukiang itself was interesting enough, and my love for Chinese porcelain—from the famous near-by city of King-tê-ch'eng—dates from my buyings in the main-street shops of Kiukiang. Incidentally I had learnt plenty of colloquial Chinese in these same shops, as of course one did not go in and say—“Hi, I want that,” plank

down the price asked and clear out. Oh dear no! We don't do that in polite Chinese bargaining. We stroll in, greet the man behind the counter and discuss—well, anything except the price of a little vase in the back shop, which he knows, and we know, will be the piece “we shall eventually buy.”

A few days later we happen in again and talk this time about “tribute ware,” Kuan-yao, and its many excellencies. We also volunteer information about ourselves. How poor we are, but how much we admire his wares. A little later we make our “first” offer. He recoils in astonished sorrow, and mutters as it were *sotto voce* “Pu kou pen,” meaning thereby that the miserable sum we have the ignorance to offer will not compensate him for the expenditure of capital necessitated by its acquisition. More regrets at our poverty—in which he shares—and at long last signs of relenting. We leave it at that, pretend to think that the lowered price is really the “shao-pu-mai” or limit of his wish to please us, and go our ways, albeit slowly and sorrowfully home. Next day we come to real business and the vase is ours—although no doubt at a price a Chinese client would have had a fit over.

Still, think of the practice in Chinese “colloquial” and native etiquette! We began with phrases from the *T'zū-êrh-ch'i*, but soon got beyond that excellent but wearisome textbook, then in the cardboard-bound edition before the Hillier combination put life and soul into it.

Kiukiang in the late 'Seventies was still a tea-port in the sense that it was visited each year by foreign tea-tasters. Amongst them was Archibald Little—not then known to Upper Yangtze fame. He was never very successful in business, but “found himself” in Ichang in the uphill work of establishing as a fact that the “rapids” in the upper reaches could be negotiated by steam craft if only properly engined and built. “His praise is sung by loftier harps than mine.”

But one can thank God that he turned from being a "mai-mai-jên" to the higher callings of exploration and writing. He died before the era of K.B.E. given to all and sundry, but one marvels at the want of recognition at the hands of the British Government which was his lot. His wife, too, nobly aided him and did a splendid service to humanity in her anti-footbinding crusade. Possibly, like another great explorer, "his merits were too great to be acknowledged." I wonder! But their names and their works will live after them.

H. T. Wade, not unaptly called the Father of Shanghai cricket, was also a tea-buyer at Kiukiang in those days. He was ever a pessimist as to the world in general, but hopeful as any optimist when tea improved a halfpenny. He would rail at life in general, and tea in particular, all through a summer's night, and yet the next morning would be quite sure he had chanced on a plum "chop."

Another very genial member of the small Kiukiang circle was Alexander Campbell—a brawny Scot—afterwards a very successful Shanghai "tai-pan." Patrick McGregor Grant—teaman of Anderson & Co.—as an ex-Shanghai "Simma" gave us the necessary tone. His neckties and store clothes were always the *dernier cri*. Altogether a not uninteresting set round the "pool table" at the Club.

The journey down-river on transfer involved another visit to Shanghai—that "sink of iniquity," as someone once called it. "Give a dog a bad name." In this instance the name has stuck, but Shanghai has survived. The Yang King Pang was long ago culverted and made respectable with stately houses on either side, but in those days it was different. "Devonshire House," the headquarters of the most ancient of professions, was still an institution. It was not much patronized by local people, but to the seaman off a voyage it ever held attractions. Many an old captain grins in silence when it is mentioned,

but the yarn is generally of the nature of the thirty-nine stories "not told to ladies." This one, however, is a tale of the open air. A well-known Agent of the Messageries Maritimes was on the river front one summer afternoon and observed a French bluejacket obviously already a little the worse for shore "leaf," but evidently in search of something. The man staggered up to him and in reply to a good-natured query as to what he was looking for laid a brawny paw on his shoulder and said plaintively: "M'sieur, m'sieur, pouvez-vous me dire où sont les b—d—lles."

Astonished and indignant the Agent turned away, but the sailor unabashed and still plaintive continued—"Pardon, pardon, m'sieur," and after a short pause, "mettez-vous à ma place, trois mois à bord sans—" The appeal was not in vain. A shrug of the shoulders and a deprecatory smile. "Ce n'est pas exactement mon métier, mais"—with a nod towards the desired quarter—"si vous passerez par là—" A truly Gallic way of getting gracefully out of a difficulty.

Forty-eight hours of rather rough sea travel lands one in Chefoo—a place that is sometimes called the Brighton of China. The man who perpetrated that could have known nothing of the South-Coast towns of England. Chefoo looks west and only the Catholics have had the sense to turn their buildings to the south. I remember the dictum of the old French Father—"L'exposition du sud, tout autre est impossible!"—and often think of it as I sit here in California on the opposite side of the Pacific. We too look west, and the beach residences suffer in consequence, as well as the bathers.

It was in 1880 at Chefoo that I met Chinese Gordon. He was homeward bound after his visit to Li Hung-chang in Tientsin. The Chefoo Commissioner was an old friend from Tai-ping days and Gordon was staying with him for a few days awaiting a steamer. One night we all met at dinner, and sat

a long time afterwards listening to a most wonderful monologue from the hero of so many adventures. He talked much of King John of Abyssinia and the narrow escapes he had had at his hands. One remark about Li remains in my memory. He said in a curious, dreamy, reminiscent sort of voice—"Li is a very different sort of fellow now than when I first knew him. Then if he did not do what I wanted I would take the masts out of his boats until he gave in. But," he added, somewhat regretfully it sounded, "you can't do that with Li now." In my own subsequent dealings with the great Viceroy, this remark often came home to me. As a matter of fact, very few people cared to take Li on, either in arguments or in action, at any period of his career, and in spite of past disagreements it was evident that Gordon still cherished the old man and appreciated his undoubted courage. He told us of the advice he had given Li at his recent meeting. The "bogy" then was Russia. Gordon's views of how a Chinese army could best be used against an enemy on land are well known, but his advice (to Li) apropos of meeting a naval attack has, as far as I know, not yet been recorded. It was characteristic and grimly humorous. "I told Li the best way of getting rid of a hostile fleet at Taku would be to hire an American"—(He added *en parenthèse*, "I could get half a dozen men to-morrow for the job!")—"to go out in a row boat at night and put a keg of powder under each vessel. You should make a contract with them," i.e. the hypothetical Yankees, "to deliver the enemy's fleet at the bottom of the sea, and they would do it right enough."

Truly a short and easy way out! Li was not taking any, neither was he much inclined to Gordon's further suggestion that as head of the only really effective Chinese military force in China he should lead an army to Peking and assume supreme power. Li is reported to have replied: "All very well, but, you see, I've never been a traitor to the Throne," and to

have added, "Besides, it wouldn't succeed, and I should get my head taken off."

The scene came up graphically before one as Gordon described it in the same dreamy voice he had spoken in about King John. Amongst the guests at the Commissioner's house that night was a young American naval officer about my own age. Walking down the hill to the jetty he said, almost in tears: "King, Gordon was one of my heroes, but did you notice—?" I had, of course, but as Gordon was one of my heroes too, we agreed that we had both been mistaken. Next morning General Gordon was down in the office, and while there a letter was delivered to him. He looked at it and then handed it to me. I saw at a glance the well-known I.G. stationery, buff square envelope, etc., and his unmistakable handwriting. Gordon asked me for an envelope, slowly put the unopened letter in it, closed it and addressed it to the I.G. To my look of stupefaction he replied: "I always do that with Robert's letters. Send them back unopened. Robert is inclined to be cheeky." At the time, his action appeared quite inexplicable to me, but by the light of later knowledge I think there is no doubt that he deeply resented the I.G.'s first telegram in which there was a query as to on what terms Gordon would return to China. His answer was: "As to terms, Gordon indifferent," and it explains in a certain measure his subsequent action in keeping aloof from all foreign intermediaries in a matter which he considered was strictly between him and Li. He was not alone in this opinion. Giquel, Admiral Lang, and later on Sir Richard Dane all preferred to serve China direct rather than through the Chinese Customs!

There was at that time a German military instructor in the service of the Chefoo Intendant of Circuit, who had drilled three hundred men to a degree of high soldierly perfection. He met General Gordon and told him that he desired to drill more

and more men until China had a nucleus at least of a modern army, and complained that his employer always limited him to the same three hundred men. Gordon was quite sympathetic, and said : " Ah, you are the sort of man who gets his heart broken in China, but, no doubt, the Tao-tai thinks that too large an army would be a danger to him as well as to China." A reflex, no doubt, of his advice to Li to take the power and reign.

I was glad to have seen General Gordon in the flesh and heard him talk. He was undoubtedly too intractable a character for the material age in which he lived, and Cecil Rhodes was probably right when he said : " Gordon, your schemes will not do. There is no money in them." But only right because of the hardness of our hearts !

I was destined only to be in Chefoo a very short time, as my first seven years of service had expired and I had applied for home leave. The I.G. in reply transferred me to the London Office with the usual short notice to report there " forthwith." Meanwhile, I had become engaged to be married, and under the ægis of her mother, the late Mrs. Alexander Williamson of Chefoo, my fiancée flitted off to Shanghai. I joined them a little later, and we were married in the Shanghai Cathedral by the late Bishop Moule of Mid-China. Our honeymoon was spent on board the good ship *Khiva*, of the P. and O., homeward bound. Thus the first phase of my life in China came happily to a close, and we were soon back in London and the late Victorian atmosphere still reigning there.

My father's old friend, Mr. James Duncan Campbell, C.M.G., was then head of the London Office of the Inspectorate General of the Imperial Chinese Maritime Customs, to give it its full name. The office was at No. 8, Storey's Gate, Westminster—one of an interesting little block of houses long since swept away to make room for the improvements which have transformed and are still transforming the picturesque

streets of old Westminster. The houses were on each side of a court, and were all at least one hundred years old. There were mounting-stones for sedans in front of the street doors, and wonderful old lamp frames over them. Our house was at the St. James's Park end of the court. It had three bow windows overlooking Birdcage Walk, and though sanitary conditions were awful—until put right after two attempts—the “Sec.” (short for Mr. Campbell's official title of Non-Resident Secretary, I.G. nomenclature of a truly Hartian type) and his staff, three assistants, office-keeper and wife and office-boy, all held the place in affectionate regard.

The “Secretary's room,” a *sanctum sanctorum*, was full of holy mysteries, confidential dealings on many subjects of world-wide interest and importance between him and his great Chief in Peking. Mr. Campbell held the post of Non-Resident Secretary continuously for thirty-five years, from 1874 to his lamented death in 1907. In many ways he was a most remarkable man, of whom much more anon. I had the good luck to serve two terms with him as my Chief, and eventually “sat in his chair”—I hope not altogether unworthily—for over six years, 1914-20, when my own retirement became due.

CHAPTER V

Life at the London Office—Warships for the Chinese Navy—The Chinese Admiral Ting at Newcastle—Social Democratic Federation in London sees danger in the Chinese crews—A disagreeable Service incident—Transferred to Shanghai, 1883-85—A Senior Commissioner's opinion on Robert Hart's justice—Transferred to Kiukiang, 1885-87—The "Hulks" and how one of them was destroyed by fire—A Chinese Gunboat and its old-time Commander—Our local "Gym"—The I.G.'s visit—His "likes" and "dislikes."

THE PERIOD of my first service at the London Office was two years, and at the expiration of that period I was granted an unasked-for and unwanted leave of absence for one year. The two years at the London Office had been full of interest and served to introduce me to a side of the Inspector General's activities of which I, in common with most members of the Service, had been in profound ignorance. And no wonder. Every newly appointed man to the L.O. was required to sign a written order from the Inspector General to the effect that the transactions of the London Office, "from the spending of a penny to the purchase of a battleship," were absolutely confidential. The penalty of breaking this rule was dire enough. Dismissal and loss of all "bonus" benefits.

And this leads up to an interesting phase in the office transactions. Soon after my arrival, Mr. Campbell was actively engaged with the firm of Sir William Armstrong & Co., of Newcastle-on-Tyne, in sending off to China the little fleet of "mosquito gunboats," as they were promptly named on reaching China, and two fast cruisers of a new type. This

was practically the beginning of China's aspirations for a national fleet. The gunboats—designed by the late George Rendel—were small vessels of great beam and shallow draught. They carried a big Armstrong gun in the bow, and were in fact nothing but floating gun-carriages. The idea was to attack larger vessels at long range. The two cruisers—*Chao-yang* and *Yang-wei*—were, in those days, very modern indeed, and after all Board of Trade questions were settled, they travelled to China with British skippers and engineers, but manned by Chinese sailors specially sent from China for the purpose, and arrived safely at their ports of destination in North China—Chefoo and Tientsin.

These ships were, as before stated, all contracted for and built by the Armstrong firm, but strikes and other delays arose until it so happened that the ships were not ready for some months after the arrival of the crews—some three hundred Chinese bluejackets under the command of the ill-fated Admiral Ting of Wei-hai-wei fame. It immediately became a problem as to what was to be done with regard to these men, only partially solved by their practical “internment” on board the steamer of the China Merchants (Chinese flag) which brought them over, in a private anchorage provided by the contractors at their Tyneside works. It was necessary to restrict their liberty a good deal, as the Tyneside “chappies,” stirred up by labour leaders, were at first very hostile in the belief that the Chinese were “dock labourers” and the forerunners of much more “Chinese labour” to follow. This delusion was much fostered by the action of the newly formed Social Democratic Federation in London, under the leadership of the late Mr. H. M. Hyndman. The meeting-place of the Federation was then in an upper room in Palace Chambers, Westminster, just opposite Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament. Westminster was placarded with “posters” denouncing the latest trick

of employers of labour and declaring that the Chinese imported at Newcastle were a grave menace to the British working-man. Meetings were held and the usual propaganda initiated. By Mr. Campbell's instructions I waited on Mr. Hyndman and told him I had been sent to explain to him the real purpose of the presence of the Chinese sailors in Newcastle in order that he might be in possession of the facts when he presided at a "protest" meeting advertised for the next night. Hyndman was at that time a very "red hot" agitator, and he would have none of my explanations. For him the matter was a deep dark plot and he was going to show it up. I argued a bit and then told him I was coming to his meeting, and if he did not tell the audience the truth I would. He told me I could do as I liked, and seeing he did not want to hear anything to lessen the force of his latest "scoop" I took leave of him—"Au revoir." Next night I duly attended the meeting, and to my surprise, although the Chinese subject was billed, no mention of it was made. The meeting from the commencement was out of hand and Hyndman, evidently, was an advocate for "Go as you please." My neighbour, a machinist to whom I confided my "mission," laughed a good deal and said: "You wait a bit," and soon a big, unwieldy sort of man with a strong German accent "got the floor" and from one thing to another at length arrived at the nationalization of the land. My machinist friend remarked: "That's all right. It's 'is 'obby. You won't 'ear much more about the Chinese to-night." And so it turned out, but the end was dramatic. A raucous voice shouted: "What about them chairs?" (We were sitting on Austrian bent-wood cane chairs.) "Where were they made?" The interrupter swung the chair round his head with small regard to his neighbours. He went on in language more forcible than polite to denounce a danger nearer home than China, and I remember we all talked at once until the meeting broke up,

as the newspapers say, "in confusion." I think Hyndman was well content at the turn affairs had taken, and no more was heard of the matter. Meanwhile at Newcastle experiments were being made, and small bodies of Chinese bluejackets in neat uniforms were "let out" on the streets of Newcastle. Far from any hostility, they were enthusiastically received by every man, woman and child in the crowd, *Magna comitante catervâ*. Their début was an enormous success—the tall figure of Admiral Ting, in his picturesque Mandarin robes, had long since become a familiar feature in the town, and his wholesale buyings in the shops of highly priced articles—such as ornamental clocks and musical boxes—had made him very popular. Consequently in lower strata of society "down town" every Chinese sailor was dubbed an admiral and so addressed. They were asked into humble houses and made much of at tea and walks afterwards. Race-prejudice, if it ever existed, vanished before propinquity, and propinquity in its turn produced the usual results. If slant-eyed babies were a feature later on, what of it? Did not the Armada sailors make a similar impression in days gone by on the coasts of Norfolk and elsewhere in the British Isles?

Admiral Ting was much beloved by the small children of the river-side "chappies." They would run after him to shake hands, much to his distress. "Pu kan ching" (not clean), he would murmur, and put the grubby little paw aside with a pleasant smile.

I was happy enough in the L.O., save for an ugly "jolt" to my joy and pride in the Customs Service. The I.G. was great on telegraphing in cipher, and had himself evolved a "three-letter code," which a high authority in the Eastern Telegraph Company once told me was the worst he had ever known. It was the despair of operators, but presented no sort of difficulties to its creator. Both he and Mr. Campbell—from long use and wont—could read a message

almost without "decoding." It was only the messages in cipher form that were on record in the public archives of the office. The decoded messages were recorded in a book kept by the Chief in his private archives. But all cipher telegrams in and out were confirmed by post each week, and the long rows of the three-letter code had to be transcribed on a special office form for this purpose. They were copied out by a junior assistant and "certified correct" by a senior with initials attached. One fatal day I attached my P. H. K. to a copy of a long message after careful comparison with the original text. Some months afterwards a despatch arrived from the Inspectorate General pointing out an "evident" mistake in the copy. Mr. King was to be told that if he ever again put his initials as certifying correctness in a document that was not correct, his name would be placed at the bottom of his list, etc., etc., with other dire threats. The record was looked up, and it appeared that the original and its copy were exactly alike, so Mr. Campbell wrote: "Neither Mr. . . . , who copied the message, nor Mr. King, who verified it, is to blame." The wrong letter in the group had been in fact in the original message, written by Mr. Campbell himself late one night. I was thus vindicated, and naturally thought the minatory despatch would at least have been withdrawn. But nothing happened, and it is still in the London Office archives for a future psychoanalyst to decide upon!

I left the office at the expiration of my two years without promotion. Our second child was born during the involuntary home leave that followed, and as we had no money things were none too cheerful. I was transferred to Canton, but on arrival at Hong-Kong (in November 1883) found the orders were for Shanghai. We had come out with only "hot-weather kit" and were plunged into a very different climate in the depth of winter. It was of course a heart-rending outlay on warm clothing, but we arrived

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on the night of the St. Andrew's Ball, and that itself was warming. Of course a word of warning as to the change of plan would have saved all that and have been only just, but for some reason or other it was not vouchsafed.

Years later, when an address was in course of preparation to be presented by the Customs Staff to its Chief, one of the Senior Commissioners, an American, remarked: "I hope there will be nothing about justice in it, for if so I shall not be able to sign it."

While attached to the Shanghai Office—1883 to 1885—several interesting bits of "special duty" came my way. I was detached from ordinary duty for some three months investigating the so-called "re-export" frauds which were causing large losses to the Revenue. It would be wearisome to go into details. The work of checking transactions backwards by the light of falsified Chinese documents was long and intricate, but our efforts were crowned with success and delinquents—in and out of the Service, for there was widespread collusion—were eventually made to suffer both in person and pocket.

My personal recompense was a request from the Shanghai Commissioner that I might not be transferred from the port, where I "was doing very useful work in a special direction." As a result I was immediately transferred to Kiukiang in an inferior position to the one I had held there some six years previously! So up the river we again "galumphed," and stayed there, marked only by "family events," from September 1885 to February 1887. We had one very severe winter there. Frost and snow and the lake covered with bearing ice. Alas! the community had no skates, and Shanghai none either. The climate of Mid-China is disagreeable in mid-winter—cold east winds and much rain; but it is seldom that the thermometer goes low enough for long enough to give skating a chance. The Bund

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along the Yangtsze River front at Kiukiang has on it many fine trees, and their branches and leaves all bedizened with frozen snow made an exquisite show for foreigners and Chinese alike. But the load of frozen snow was too much for the galvanized iron godown, a very large one, of a leading foreign firm, and the roof came crashing down, fortunately without doing much damage. An amusing incident grew out of this catastrophe. The local Agent was called to account by his "Taipan" in Shanghai, and blamed for not having the snow swept off the roof. Dame Partington and her broom could not have done it, but "commercial common sense" saved the situation for him when the facts became known.

But this accident was neither so dramatic nor so spectacular as the destruction by fire of one of the River Hulks. These were usually dismantled old liners—one I remember was in her time a crack vessel of the Messageries Maritimes, and still had a saloon right aft in the old style, reminiscent of French decorative taste in days of yore. The victim on this occasion was a comfortable hulk of British origin. She was full of cargo and had a roofed-over deck of shingles from stem to stern. The fire, cause unknown, broke out about midnight. We were all at a dance in the Commissioner's house, but soon every hand was hard at work with the one "Manual" the port possessed. It belonged I think to the Customs, so our staff naturally took charge. We squirted for hours but without much effect, when it was suggested that the only way was to scuttle the old craft. But how to do it? No one could venture on board as the whole ship was in flames, so I volunteered to get the one Chinese "guard boat" to come round and have a shy at the job.

It should be explained that a guard boat is a vessel propelled generally by long sweeps, but is rigged with mast and sails useful in a following wind. She carries, besides a crew of about a dozen men armed with

match-locks, a bow-chaser, muzzle-loading gun of the carronade order. It took some time to rouse the skipper from his slumbers in his comfortable quarters in the stern sheets, but when fully awakened his command of curses to his crew was quite adequate. In due time we got under weigh and neared the burning ship. I then explained what was wanted of him. He had a cannon; could he load it and would it go off all right as far as the men behind were concerned? Did he think he could hit the foreign ship and sink her? He said he could do all that and more, but added: "K'ung pa, yao pu kou"—feared he had not enough powder—a euphemism of course to break it gently to me that there was nothing doing. I agreed that powder was an antecedent condition to complete success, but told him he and his boat must come along with me "all the same." He came and saw, and eventually returned to his beloved anchorage in the creek to report no doubt to his superior, *nem. con.*, his many deeds of "derring do"—the next day.

In those days peace reigned within our borders. No warring Tuchuns harried the country-side, and the mere presence of the guard boat with her blue-striped sails and gun of unknown potentialities was sufficient to keep river thieves in our vicinity in decorous retirement. Rice was plentiful and cheap. It would have been "Pu hao k'an" indeed—in other words, the worst of bad form for people who had enough to eat to turn to crime.

Fortified by my experiences in Shanghai, I got the Customs Staff together to start the Kiukiang "Gym." We met in an old tea godown or warehouse, and the thing ran well for a few years. Visitors' night always brought in a good deal of talent from the local river steamers, and many a little quarrel amongst members of the staff was settled by a bout with the gloves ending in friendship. Truly, perspiration is a great solvent. But unfortunately it did not turn out so well for me. The I.G. was touring the ports, and looked

in for a day at Kiukiang. He was, according to rumour, not in the best of tempers, and told the Commissioner on arrival that any official matters were to be written but not spoken about. A tiffin followed at the Commissioner's house, to which the members of the Indoor (or office) Staff were bidden. It was only too evident that the great man was "peevish," as the Americans say, but he tried to be very *empressé* with his hostess, the Commissioner's wife, a remarkably handsome woman. When we were ushered into the drawing-room she was sitting on the sofa and he on a cushion at her feet. I remember one sickening remark about candid (candied) or sweet opinion. Alas! her mind was not up to the physical beauty of her face, and there was no prosperity for that and other kindred *démarches* in the ear of his hearer.

However, he "took it out in corns." Turning to me, he remarked: "I hear you are the Master of the Gymnasium here. Pray, where did you learn about such things?" I must confess I was a little put out, and thought how much nicer it would have been if he could have brought himself to say something decent about my little effort. However, I replied: "In Dresden, sir, where I first met Liot." (Liot, his private secretary, was sitting opposite.) He said coldly: "I was not aware that you and Liot had met before," and turned away, leaving me self-convicted as an athlete!

What he really did like in his subordinates has always been a Service problem. Various aspiring youths tried in various ways to gain his favour. His partiality for pretty faces was proverbial, and yet not always to be relied on. One misguided youth once sent him a photograph of a beautiful actress as a birthday greeting. The answer was crushing. "Thank you for the picture, but I would rather have had a piece of original Chinese composition in your own handwriting. But every dog will follow his own nose."

It was not very polite, and the unhappy youth brought it to me in despair. I comforted him and said : " I wish to God he would write to me like that." Sure enough the dog that followed his own nose was soon more rapidly and strikingly promoted than any other contemporary dog. No one really knew how to take Robert Hart. His likes and dislikes reminded one of the celebrated Blondin Donkey. The expected was always met by the unexpected. " How is it," once exclaimed his most distinguished German Commissioner, appealing to Heaven with uplifted hands. " How is it that the I.G., even when he seems to want to please people, always does something to displease them ? " Nobody ever knew—or will know !

But I have outrun my horses and must hark back to Shanghai for a bit.

CHAPTER VI

Local "Sports" at Shanghai in 1883-85—The "Gym" and Boxing Ring at the Main Guard—Local champions in the fistic art—The Shanghai Rowing Club—The Light Horse—Transferred to Tientsin, 1887-89—Become Senior Assistant to Commissioner Detring.

AT THE PERIOD of which I write, 1883-85, the Shanghai Gymnasium was located at the Main Guard of the Shanghai Volunteers in the Cathedral Compound. It was a long narrow building and had been originally erected to accommodate the congregation during the re-building of the Cathedral. The roof beams fitted in admirably for gymnastic purposes, and we had a long row of "rings" and two trapezes in addition to the usual "outfit" of clubs, weights, and general "Gym" apparatus. There was, however, no boxing ring, and I believe I may claim whatever merit attaches to its introduction.

I have always held to the doctrine that a boxer's real qualities are best shown in a roped ring. It focuses so to speak attack, defence, slipping, ducking, and, last but not least, "foot-work"—a matter considered to be of the first importance by no less an authority than Ned Donnelly, who used to teach "the steps" before he allowed the neophyte to don the mittens. The most scientific boxer of my day in Shanghai was the erstwhile Queensbury Cup middle and heavy weight Champion, the late C. J. Holliday. "Charlie Holliday," as he was always called, was one of the leading features in the Shanghai life of the period. Besides being the local head of an important Manchester firm, he was Commandant of the Volun-

teers and the life and soul of the Amateur Dramatic Society. Although not much of an actor, he had a wide knowledge of the craft and was an excellent, if somewhat autocratic, stage-manager. In those days social difficulties discussed in front in the play were as nothing to the same problems "behind the scenes." But to return to our muttons in the Shanghai "Gym." Charlie Holliday was rather a man who could win on points than a fighter. In this he differed a good deal from his younger brother Cecil—a most determined bruiser—but neither he nor his brother took much interest in the Gym. Our habitués were J. C. Callaway, Chris Moller, "Daisy" Jackson, E. W. Noel, Michaelson, A. J. Reeks, and about half a score of others less known to fame, but as everybody was welcome to come in and box on Club nights, we had no lack of local talent. The shipping men—especially the Scottish engineer element—were all votaries of the art, and one never knew what might be pending when a man stepped into the ring. One night I remember a most formidable-looking person was introduced. His square chin and concentrated mouth proclaimed a fighter even over a nice white collar; but when he stripped his muscles were a sight for gods and men. He was none other than Gordon of the *Rosetta*, known to fistic fame in the fleet as the P. and O. "slogger." *Faute de mieux*, I had to take him on—in fact it came to light afterwards that I was the object of his visit. Now, though not exactly "trained abroad my arms to wield," I had been taught by the little London Pro in the German Gym at King's Cross to "mind my steps," and get out of the way of a heavy-weight's "right hand." So I skipped round the eighteen-foot ring, with every inch of which I was well acquainted, until Gordon began to tire and the large audience to laugh, and was lucky enough to keep off a "knock-out" that would inevitably have come my way had I not been accustomed at home to box with such formidable antagonists as Davey Gibson, of Inter-

national Football fame, and Jack Angle, the well-known referee. "Keeping out of the way" was my speciality then as now; although now as both Angle and myself have given up the gloves for the fencing foils, we find how true it is that *absence du corps* is the best parry. On the occasion referred to, when the right moment came I timed the slogger's rush with a straight left, and in the parlance of the Ring he hit himself a staggering blow on the nose. Being a full-blooded man there was lots of claret, and after a hearty handshake the incident closed. I never met Gordon again until one day "mine host" of the Terminus Hotel, St. Aubin, in the island of Jersey, told me that Captain Gordon was downstairs and would like to see me. He added with an appreciative smile, he too was an old sport: "Captain Gordon says he used to box with you in Shanghai years ago." Truly it was some thirty-five years to be exact, and I was soon grasping the hand of the P. and O. "slogger" and his first question was: "Have you still got that straight left of yours?" He had retired from sea life but not from the sea, and was the owner of a wonderful little yacht, which had just attracted enormous fame from the fact that she broke away from her moorings one night and picked her course out to the coast of France all through those awful intervening rocks without a soul on board and also, *mirabile dictu*, without damage. The flight of years had had little to say to Gordon. His muscles were as hard as ever, and he had done a good deal of War service in the crisis of 1914-18. He was a leading spirit in Channel Island boxing, and promoted the noble art amongst the local youths every winter.

We had many little incidents of the ring. There was one that might have turned out badly but luckily did not. It was more due to the new-fangled boxing gloves we were then using than to anything else; they had no fingers. One slipped one's hand in and folded the fingers over a small bar of webbing in the

centre. The result was a close-folded fist inside with the usual stuffing round it. Noel—a much heavier man than myself—put them on one night and I, unfortunately, landed rather a heavy “cross-counter” just above one eye, and a very ugly cut resulted. We hurried him off to Dr. Milles—Hon. Surgeon to the Light Horse—who promptly stopped the bleeding and strapped the wounded man up. I was personally not known to the doctor at the time, and he remarked to Noel: “This man King must be rather a brutal sort of fellow, I should think.” Noel was immensely pleased and told the yarn freely the next day. Soon afterwards at a Paper Hunt, Milles and I met and rode home alongside one another. On parting he said: “By the way, I don’t seem to know your name?” I said: “Oh yes, you do—‘that brutal fellow King.’” Tableau. But I was glad of the chance of putting myself right in his eyes all the same, and he became an occasional dropper-in at the Main Guard afterwards.

As time went on we evolved some very good boxers. J. C. Callaway—a fine, strong fellow—was my most successful pupil. He had great natural aptitude and gifts for the game, and lives in my memory as the only one of the crowd with whom I could take no liberties. Amongst other events we held a championship meeting, Callaway and myself standing out. It was won by Chris Moller—another of my pupils. He was a son of the locally celebrated Nils of that ilk, a sturdy old Scandinavian seaman. After “sonny” had been proclaimed champion old Nils hugged me round the neck and thanked me for “making a man of Chris.” That night was one of wild enthusiasm and the crowd in the old Main Guard surged up and down in the hottest excitement. A fighting spirit was abroad too, and the audience “demonstrated” outside in a series of impromptu battles. But all ended well, and if the good Dean ever heard of it, he was sportsman enough to say nothing.

THE SHANGHAI LIGHT HORSE

Ted Fabris was our leading gymnast. He was a beautifully built man and a grand performer on the flying rings and trapeze. He was also a fine rider and one of the most elegant of dancers. In fact a dandy of the Wellington sort. His clothes fitted so well that he looked as if he had been "poured into them," as one admiring dame remarked of him. The Gym also had a four-oar at the Rowing Club, to which many of our members belonged. I remember one "gruelling" experience, when rowing bow with Fabris, Munster Schultz, and Meuser—easily the three strongest men in the place. We started down-river on the tide and came back against it. Result, considerable loss of valuable epidermis.

Rowing very nearly proved my undoing. I took a single-sculling racing "funny" out one afternoon and was enjoying a quiet paddle, when my craft suddenly went down by the head, leaving me in the water. I did not dare make for the shore, since landing in the soft mud of the Shanghai River would have meant staying there. Luckily the German Eight hove in sight, and, being a gymnast, I soon got on her over the bow without capsizing them as well. We retrieved the wherry into the bargain and towed her back home, when it was found that the canvas cover was rotten and had carried away suddenly. But had no German Eight been there I might have been one more to disappear in the ooze until fished out a "demned, moist, unpleasant body, dem it," by the River Police. I always preferred sculls to oars. The late Guy Hillier, of the Hong-Kong Bank, and I used often to double-scull together. He was then a junior in the Bank, but fast acquiring a reputation as a Chinese scholar with a turn for business. Truly a *rara avis* in those days.

As an old London Scot I was not long in joining the Shanghai Volunteers, and by way of a change "opted" for the Light Horse. J. J. Keswick, the local head of the "Princely House" (J. M. and Co.),

was commandant, ably backed up, especially on parade, by Trooper Hough—a former British cavalryman—of the Ewo office. Most of the troop rode their own ponies, but I was too poor to run to that. So on mounted occasions I bestrode a livery-stable hack—a very decent animal, but with slit ears, a common way of marking such ponies. Keswick was pained at my mount. He was very sensitive to ridicule, and it came his way occasionally, as demonstrated by his nickname “Chesterfield,” and he had visions of a Hayllar cartoon in the Shanghai comic paper depicting the dire results of sword-practice in the Shanghai Light Horse. However, I respectfully pointed out that I could not see my way to anything better unless he would mount me from the Ewo Stables, and the matter was dropped. We were armed with a long clumsy straight sword and a carbine—latter carried in a holster sling. Our uniform was something in the Household Cavalry (Blue) order, with a gorgeous mess jacket for festive occasions. All very pretty, and the Light Horse Ball was a leading feature of the Shanghai season.

From here I must pick up the threads left loose in the last chapter. To resume: I felt at the time that the I.G.’s visit to Kiukiang would not be healthy for me, and so it proved. On 16th December, 1886, our fourth son was born, making a large young family of five, four boys and a girl, to share our fortunes. Very soon afterwards a telegram from Peking transferred me to Tientsin. It was a great blow, as we were living cheaply and tranquilly, and would have been only too thankful to be left in peace. But I was a Married Assistant. “Married Assistants.” The I.G. Circulars are full of warnings and even threats to such misguided people, and yet without them, what? Contrast the many happy homes of the China of to-day with the slow degradation of the White Man under the “unofficial wife” system of the past. Psycho-analysis was not then so well understood as it is now, and many things in Robert Hart’s dealings

with the married problem in his Service which seemed puzzling and obscure are now plain enough. But they are none the better for all that.

But to Tientsin we were ordered and to Tientsin we had to go. First, all our nice furniture, including my wife's highly prized piano, had to be parted with. In those days Married Assistants were transferred from empty houses to empty houses, and no allowances for freight charges. The married quarters at Kiukiang were empty, but not swept or garnished when we arrived, and we found the Tientsin quarters in exactly the same condition. I remember how thankful we were to an especially kind friend, Butterfield and Swire's Agent, for taking over the piano at the price we paid for it.

I have alluded to the Pecksniffian element in the I.G.'s kaleidoscopic "make-up." It was delightfully set forth on this occasion. He wrote to my new Chief: "I am sending you King, one of the best men in the Service." Apparently merit in my case was to be its own reward. I had again been transferred without increase of pay, while the procession of juniors, good, bad, and indifferent, over my unlucky head continued. However, the change once accomplished, although it crippled us financially for several years, was not without compensations.

I was Senior Assistant, and as my Chief was more interested in Chinese politics than office matters, I soon was accorded a free hand in the running of the show. The mode of conferring his trust on me was characteristic of the man and his work. "You should be a Deputy Commissioner but you are not. However, I regard you as such. Therefore as long as your decisions are in accordance with the I.G.'s Circulars and common sense, I shall not interfere with you." This was my first introduction to Gustav Detring—a man to whom the Tientsin community should have erected a statue but did not do so. Still, for all that he was one of the makers of modern Tientsin, and at

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that time the only man of faith and vision enough to aim at issues and provide for contingencies that then seemed remote and vague enough. Tientsin had just begun to hum. Concession hunters were frequent and persistent callers at the Yamen of His Excellency, Li Hung-chang, Viceroy and trusted henchman of the Empress Dowager. Detring was Li's right-hand man in all foreign and not a few native affairs. His energy was unbounded—and though a typical German in many ways, had a world view that did not always put “Deutschland über Alles.” Later on it was different, but at the time of which I write he was undoubtedly the leading spirit in Tientsin. He had besides invariably the courage of his opinions, and invested his own money as freely as Municipal Funds in local improvements. The Race Course, Victoria Park, Gordon Hall, and extension of the British Settlements were largely made possible by his skill in reconciling Chinese opinion to foreign schemes. He was married to a Viennese—a woman of great charm and beauty, who, with her bevy of pretty daughters, playfully described by her as her “little monkeys,” had a position and prestige all her own in Tientsin society.

CHAPTER VII

Gustav Detring and Li Hung-chang—Simultaneous evacuation of Korea by Chinese and Japanese troops—Hunan troops cause trouble to foreign transports—Life in Tientsin—Chiarini's circus—Club entertainments, ice-yachting, etc., etc.—I get smallpox and nearly succumb to an overdose of antipyrin—A club fracas—Alexander Michie and The Chinese Times—Baron Von Möllendorff, the ex-King of Korea—Lo Feng-luh and the Peiyang Fleet.

BUT OFFICIALLY DETRING and I always got on excellently. He soon found out that I was the sort of person who could be trusted to use his powers without attempting to usurp them. I made a point of telling him each day all that was happening in the office. He never listened, as his mind was always full of schemes in which Customs business had little part, but he never criticized, either to my face or behind my back, and that helped me enormously in my daily dealings with both Staff and Public.

I never knew Detring in his early days, but it is related that when stationed at Chinkiang a street riot took place and the "wu-lai," or scallawags of the river front, invaded the Custom House and Assistants' quarters. It was winter-time in the afternoon and all Detring did was to put the poker in the fire in an absent-minded sort of way. Presently things took an acute form and the mob made a rush upstairs. They were confronted by a Herculean figure with a red-hot poker in its hand. Naturally they turned to flee, but on the way downstairs the red-hot poker took toll on the nether garments of not a few. A man of action stood revealed and what is more a strategist.

There were hot pokers of another sort, but equally

potent, in store for all—Chinese and foreign alike—who gave him trouble.

It was an open secret that the I.G. was not too well pleased with the limitation of his autocratic power which resulted from the Viceroy's ægis over Detring. No question of "service exigencies" could ever unseat Detring from the Tientsin Commissionship while Li ruled the province. Both men "sparred for openings" which never came, and continued so to spar until "Death proclaimed it pay-time." Meantime, however, secure from interference of his nominal master, Detring went on with his schemes. Both he and the Viceroy were fond of playing at politics and many were the "all-night" sittings, at the Yamen, to which the Tientsin Commissioner was summoned.

Nor were the issues purely political. Li had a keen eye for the main chance, as would-be *concessionnaires* soon found out. Detring had no "money sense" and a great deal of Don Quixote in his composition. The combination was as unusual as irresistible.

The creation of the Peiyang or Northern Fleet under Captain (afterwards Admiral) Lang, R.N., and the ever-present fear of the growing Navy of Japan, led to the adaptation of Lü-shun-K'ou, or Port Arthur, as a war-port. It had various vicissitudes. The Chinese excavated, the French built the dry dock, and German guns were mounted on the forts.

Enormous sums were spent. I was there on a small mission during the excavation period. Li had sent over 10,000 soldiers to dig out the basin, but as it was to be a war-port no *women* were allowed within its precincts. I remember the tale told me by a gigantic Irish surgeon who was the sole representative of foreign hygiene in the place, but it is not one that can be set down here. In such matters and in similar conditions inevitable results follow, whether in the East or in the West. A Scottish engineer was the only other foreigner. He had been called in because a

certain large pump of British *provenance* had been condemned by the French, but our Scottish friend made it "wurrk," and it "wurrked" long after the French had been bought out and left the peninsula. That "small mission," by the way, nearly turned out badly. Its object was to carry out a simultaneous evacuation of Japanese and Chinese troops from Korean territory. The port of departure for the Chinese was Masampoo. My functions, for which I was indebted to Detring, were purely advisory. The ss. *Lee Yuen* and another Chinese-owned vessel of foreign type, with British officers, were told off for the service. We of the *Lee Yuen* took off some 800 Chinese soldiers, with officers and other *impedimenta*, including some very intractable ponies.

We left in the afternoon and all went well until next morning, when I at once noticed the well-known symptoms of trouble brewing. The "Braves" were all Hunan men—the best fighting material in China. I tried to get in touch with their officers, but both commander and staff were in placid sleep and "poppy" dreams.

The whole of the upper deck was crowded and the skipper and I had to take refuge in the chart-room, that served as his cabin. We had placed a rope across the side of the deck giving access to the cabin to allow the skipper to get up on the bridge. In this six-foot space I lay down on a long cane chair and waited "developments." Soon an enormous Hunan brave, with magnificent coiffure—a queue the thickness of which proclaimed him a hero in love as well as war—came up to the rope and made the cutting motion with his hands on his own neck which signifies an aimable desire to slit the other man's throat. I smiled blandly and asked him how he was getting on and whether he liked being a sea soldier better than a land soldier. After an incredulous stare, it seemed gradually to dawn on him that I was speaking Chinese, especially as I had taken care to be rather slangy.

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I have seldom found classical Chinese much use in a mob.

His grievance was the old "ship-board" one. Grub bad, and "pu-kou," not enough. We were bound for Port Arthur and our ship a very slow old thing. They considered our skipper was to blame, and although I might be "as described," thought a clean sweep would have to be made of the whole lot of Yang-Kuei-tzû or foreign devils on board.

By this time we were so to speak "conferring together as friends." The skipper was, of course, for hurling the whole lot overboard, but I pointed out that even redoubtable fighters like himself and the Chief Engineer could hardly hope for much success. So it was agreed that the situation was to be left to me only. Meantime, other braves were threatening murder on the high seas, but only every now and then. There was evidently an easier feeling abroad, and things calmed down until we were just outside the entrance to the harbour of Port Arthur. Suddenly a demand was put forward not to enter the port but to land them on the coast at a spot not far from their camp. Refusal was to be instant death.

I said what was the use of my telling the Viceroy that they were the finest troops in the world, if they were in fact too weak and tired to march a few miles to camp. Would not that be a "loss of face" not only to them, but to their province; besides, I added, the Viceroy would be very angry, and why should *we*—associating myself with them in the phrase that means you and I together—risk that.

So all ended well. But the other ship had not got off so cheaply. The "troops" had taken charge, eaten up everything on board and stripped every bit of brass off the ship, but the foreign officers had "arms," which we had not, and were able to navigate the ship and hold their own from the security of the hurricane deck without the necessity of shooting anybody.

During our stay in Tientsin the port was visited by "Chiarini's Circus." He brought with him the usual outfit—lions and tigers, clowns and acrobats, "*haute-école* ladies," as well as those lesser swells who only jump through hoops. We received them all with open arms. There was a flat-rate of \$1 for admission and all Tientsin met there after dinner. I remember we often had to borrow our admission money from the cook—the only capitalist in our family.

One day Detring told me that the Viceroy was going to give a "gala" performance at the Circus, at which the whole hierarchy would as in duty bound be present, and to which all foreigners of sufficient rank and fashion would be invited as his guests. On the morning of the performance to take place that night Detring asked me to go down to the tent early and generally represent him there. He was, of course, the real instigator of the show. There was an enormous crowd round the tent, and the officials, big and little, were filing in to meet their great Chief. After them came quite a little army of hat-bearers.

I should explain that the Imperial official hat was gorgeous, but rather heavy to sit under for any length of time. It was, however, *de rigueur* on all official occasions. Hence came the wise custom, so typical of Chinese common sense, of keeping the hat in its band box in charge of a servant until the moment arrived to don it. Now it so happened that the officials were all inside the tent, and the hats' bearers were waiting outside. As the time for the Viceroy's arrival drew near these men crowded to the entrance to deliver hats to owners. Chiarini was a very violent man and literally ruled his company with a rod of iron. Not knowing the importance of the hat, he thought it was only a trick of unauthorized persons to get inside and resolutely barred the entrance. He was a big, ferocious-looking man and had armed himself with a large and heavy carrying-pole. I

explained matters to him, and at last had to order him in the name of the Viceroy to stand on one side or take the consequences.

Meanwhile, the news had spread outside, and the hat-bearers had secured not only the sympathy of the crowd, but also enlisted the Viceroy's body-guard in their cause.

These men were all from the province of Anwhei—Li's birthplace—and were known as the Viceroy's "tigers." There was no time to lose, so telling Chiarini that our lives depended on his keeping quiet, I stepped into the semi-circle of angry people in front of the entrance to the tent. There was an ominous pause, and as I moved up closer the "tigers" began to look nasty. One man half drew his sword and the mob yelled, "Sha, Sha"—Kill, kill. Now in China a mob can be managed if induced to laugh even for a moment. So I went up to the warlike person with the sword, and said not to him, but *coram populo*, in Tientsin slang: "This is a very dangerous fellow, he's going to kill me." The crowd began to laugh and somebody said: "Oh, that's Ch'ing Lao-yeh," mentioning me by my Chinese name. I nipped in and said: "Yes, I'm here to take care of you all," at which sally more laughter followed, and the procession of hat-bearers filed in.

It was at Tientsin that my wife and I had an object-lesson in the folly and futility of trying to avoid Fate that has lasted us for all our lives. The great plain round Tientsin was flooded, causing much misery to the poorer inhabitants, who were compelled to leave their homes and take refuge on what small patches of higher ground were still out of water. The problem of supplying them with food was very acute and relief parties were organized in the foreign settlements. I was as anxious to proceed as the others, and was about to do so, but our dear friend and medical adviser, the late Dr. Irwin, heard of it and protested. Smallpox was very rife amongst the

flood refugees and Irwin begged me to remember that I had a wife and five small children. Much against the grain I yielded and did not go. What happened? The only two foreigners in Tientsin who caught the disease were myself and a young Russian. Both of us should have gone, neither did and Fate got us both. My own case was not severe, thanks to the devoted hydropathic nursing of my wife—the only *contretemps* being the disastrous effects of a dose or two of antipyrin, a new febrifuge now exhibited with more caution than was then the case. From 103° my temperature fell to sub-normal. I had a feeling of utter collapse and the sensation that a lump of ice was adhering to the back of my head. Hot-water bottles lavishly distributed over my prostrate carcase gradually brought me back to life, but it was a near shave, and worried Irwin not a little. He was the prince of good fellows. Handsome and a fearless rider, beloved by all who knew him.

Since that time we ceased to strive against Fate, though Fate had by no means ceased to plague us, as will be seen later on.

Earthquakes are rare in the North of China, but the records show great disasters when they do come. We had one experience. I was having a cup of tea after office with Cecil Bowra, our last joined—a very good-looking but somewhat neurotic youth. There was a sharp report and Bowra said I wonder if “Currie-boy” (now Mr. Commissioner Currie) has blown himself up again. “Currie-boy” was an ardent electrician and not infrequently had “difficulties” when experimenting. At the same moment the house rocked gravely and sedately three times. It was not my first experience, so Bowra and I did the next “best thing,” in fact the only thing; we stood in the doorway of the room and awaited developments, which, luckily, never came. But it had been touch and go with the massive stonework of the new Custom House then in course of erection. It had six pillars in front

on the first floor, but the roof was not on and they were standing without support. However, they were built by "Cheops"—otherwise the late John Chambers, M. Inst. C.E.—one of the few men in China then entitled to those letters, and they nobly withstood so supreme a test; but Cheops himself was none too sure when the "heaves" first commenced. In our garden we had two low swings for the children. These started to swing slowly, though no man was by, and the ground rippled like shallow water in a tide-way. The damage to houses was considerable, especially at Taku, the pilot settlement near the forts of that name and historic fame, but no lives were lost.

To hark back to the smallpox for a moment. Here is a fact for vaccinators and anti-vaccinators alike. I was seedy during the incubation of the disease, but until the pustules appeared no one suspected its real nature. The five children had been with me as usual—rather more so in fact than usual—taking advantage of father being at home all day. The eldest was six years—the youngest sixteen months old. For some reason or other three had been vaccinated and two not. Neither my wife nor I had been vaccinated for years. She nursed me through the whole illness and did not take it, *neither did any one of the five*. Why, I leave others to decide. For me, Fate, pure and simple, is the sufficing cause.

We had learnt to love Tientsin. Our eldest boy went to school with a good old Dutch priest, our next-door neighbour, and my wife and I delighted to ride the "Bund ponies," very often discarded "racers," kept by Chinese for chance hire to the bluejackets of the British Navy ship which was detailed for guard duty, "frozen in" opposite the British Consulate on the Bund each winter. A friend once remonstrated with me: "What an extravagant fellow you are? I see you and your wife constantly out on different ponies." We kept our secret and let

it go at that, but continued to keep a large stud "on the Bund."

We were popular amongst the Chinese, and the "pony-men" kept us well supplied with mounts at a dollar a day whenever needed. A large family—especially of boys—brought up on small means, always appeals to the best instincts of Chinese nature, at that time untouched by the curse of later teachings of doubtful benefit. "Freiheit and Gleichheit," the Chinese imperial democracy, at least let both grow together.

The pity of it that Tuchuns and their like should have come in to spoil the harvest.

However, Tientsin for weal or woe was not to be ours for any length of time, but while it lasted we enjoyed the skating and dancing, the ice-boating and "pai-tzu" picnics of the long months of winter.

There was an excellent Club, and soon the late William McLeish, an old Dulwich master, and I started "Gym" and boxing there. It was a success from the first. We boxed and whacked one another about with basket-handled single sticks to our hearts' content, and, as usual, attracted a good deal of attention and support amongst the shipping men. They were mostly good-hearted sports, but there were exceptions, and one came my way one night when least expected in the shape of a thick-set American skipper, who asked me to put on the gloves with him. I think he said he had a special body blow he wished to demonstrate. I had washed and dressed, the Gym lights were out and I was standing at the Club Bar with my next-door neighbour Poulsen of the Telegraphs, with whom I often walked home. However, thinking no evil, I slipped on the gloves and faced him. The moment I met his glance I saw the man meant mischief.

He rushed at me in the narrow space between the bar and tables and made a vicious dig at me. I dodged and prepared for business this time, met his

next rush with a straight left and right that sent him sprawling amongst the chairs and tables. He was shaken up considerably but not hurt.

In reply to my query he said he was satisfied, and Poulsen and I left him with the Club Bar boy. I knew the man very slightly, but was told afterwards that he had promised his friends at the Astor House Bar in Shanghai that he was going to show me how to box on his next trip North. He was also the "hero" of a very mean attack on the late James Stewart of Tientsin. Here too, under pretence of showing him a hit he had knocked the breath out of an unsuspecting man, so I was rather glad I had been the means of lowering his number. These blows, like the wondrous *bottes secrètes* in the fence of by-gone days, are "all right" no doubt if they come off as described, but it is not always so. Hence the value of the noble art of Self-Defence!

I never saw my opponent again and for the life of me cannot now recall his name. R.I.P. But the tale, of course, went round, and years afterwards, when I was remarking that rough play in Clubs should always be discountenanced, a Swiss member was desirous of demonstrating his skill as a wrestler on one of his friends; a very lively Customs neophyte put in with, "What about that skipper that you, sir, licked one night in the Tientsin Club?" I reminded him perhaps of the signpost that points the way but does not follow it!

But orders were out for Chefoo and we soon were packing up to go, leaving many friends and many happy memories behind.

Tientsin of that date, 1887-89, possessed no little dramatic talent, and in Harvey Bellingham, one of the railway pioneers, an actor of extraordinary versatility. Any part—grave or gay—he was equally at home in, and, moreover, had the rare gift of being able to show others how the trick was done. Each Christmas a full-fledged Pantomime was put on the Boards

—with a Harlequinade with all the old wheezes and quips adapted to local conditions. The Harlequinades were the special care of the “Gym.” Our leading man, J. Boyce-Kup, gave a most thrilling performance on the flying rings. “Columbine,” as depicted by both Cecil Bowra and Harry Shaw, won all hearts by their grace and beauty. “Clown,” “Pantoloon,” and “Police-man” were all there and most excellently played by R. A. Cousins, Sidney Spooner, and Arthur Ash of the *Chinese Times*. On one occasion “Columbine” was so tightly laced in by the stage-manager, Alfred Smith, that her internal economy gave way and she had such a pain inside as to necessitate the application of various “liquids” before she could go on at all, and was quite unable to do her bit. This threw the rôle of “Harlequin” into greater prominence, and I’ve a vivid recollection of being just saved from breaking my neck. I had to take a flying leap through a trap and two stalwart bluejackets were to break my fall on the other side. Luckily I utilized a moment before the jump to slip out and warn them that I might be expected.

There was no one there! So the jump had to be cut out and my funeral postponed.

Costume balls were given each season and I especially remember the magnificent appearance of two young Russian girls—the Misses Belogolovy—in most gorgeous Muscovite trappings.

The late Alexander Michie held a high place in the Tientsin of that day. A merchant, but ever of a literary temperament, he found an outlet for expression in the *Chinese Times*—of which he was the first and, I think, the last editor. He was also President of the Tientsin Debating Society, and represented *haute finance* in Anglo-Chinese circles.

The columns of the *Chinese Times* bear witness to his facile wit and inimitable style, and his great work, *An Englishman in China*, will long survive as a classic. We all loved him, and those of us who could

write were eager to do so under his direction. My wife, under the pen name of "Ithuriel," did most of the book reviewing, besides getting the idea of her most successful "first book" (*Cousin Cinderella*, Bentley, 1892) from characters around us in Tientsin. Politics were more in my line, and as Viceroy Li Hung-chang was behind the paper and his policy was undoubtedly the soundest of the kind in the China of his day, one felt one was writing to order in a good cause. One such was my article on China's suzerainty over Korea, in which we demonstrated to all and sundry that Codlin (China) and not Short (Japan) was the friend of that unhappy country.

Somewhat closely associated with Michie by a friendship of long standing was another noted Tientsinite of the period, the late John Dunn, "mysterious" Dunn, as he was always called, from the deep mystery with which he was wont to involve his slightest actions. "Come and dine with us to-night," invariably met with the response, "Yes, with pleasure, if I am not sent for by the Yamen" (i.e. by Li). Poor fellow, he was only really sent for once and that nearly cost his life. His mission to the Pope, on the subject of the foreign protection in China of Chinese Catholics, came to very little, but his perilous journey over the ice outside Tientsin in order to board a steamer at the bar which was to take him South was an exhibition of pluck that showed a stout heart in a frail body.

He was a well read, cultivated man—a strict Roman Catholic—and his appearance, hooked nose and somewhat piercing eyes, suited the mystery-man parts he loved so well.

Michie was elected first President of the Tientsin Debating Society. I remember his inaugural address—a masterpiece of common sense in forcible and scholarly English. We never got, as far as I remember, to a debate on the "credibility of miracles"—a subject which had convulsed the Shanghai Debating Society a few years previously. On that occasion the Very

"CREDIBILITY OF MIRACLES"

Rev. Archdeacon Moule had undertaken the affirmative side against Dr. Alex. Jamieson, who led the local Thomases.

The Archdeacon had been rather "asking for" the controversy, as he had but recently completed a course of sermons from the pulpit of the Cathedral, in which he undertook "*to prove*" the "wondrous works" wrought in those days in Judea.

He was a scholarly divine of the old school, but, as was inevitable from the nature of the things dealt with, his proofs were only rather pathetic assertions of his own steadfast beliefs. I do not remember who "stage-managed" the public debate between him and Dr. Jamieson, but it was well done and attracted a very large audience of all that was most cultured in Shanghai, whether bond or free.

Both men were well known, but with the essential difference that while the good Archdeacon's virtues and weaknesses were patent to all who knew him and to many who did not, the Doctor's were somewhat esoteric.

He was originally intended for H. B. M.'s Consular Service in China, but early forsook it to follow a medical career. From some reason or other he never seemed to hit it off with his medical brethren in China, and at the time of which I speak (1884-85) had ceased to have much to do, either professionally or socially, with the leading men of his profession in Shanghai. He was known to be an agnostic, and it was also more than hinted that he held other views much in advance of his time.

The Archdeacon rehearsed the usual arguments, and especially the fatal one that the miracles of Christ must be true because men of all ages had been willing to die for the truths of Christianity. His attitude throughout was that of a churchman in the pulpit preaching accepted doctrines, while Jamieson began his address in a low, earnest voice and assured his audience that only a very sincere desire that truth

should prevail had induced him to appear before them.

In voice and appearance Dr. Jamieson greatly resembled the late Mr. F. W. Myers, of psychical research fame, and he had exactly Myers' impressive way of pleading for the examination of all phenomena, even though not quite in accordance with the Christian verity. He had, too, the same appeal for the other sex, and, generally speaking, had weapons in his armoury unknown to the good Archdeacon. The debate would, I fear, have left the hosts of Midian in full possession of the field had not Blücher appeared in the person of a very vigorous young American Missionary from St. John's College. He ran through Dr. Jamieson's points in a racy Yankee style, and I remember one very telling phrase with which he clinched each refutation: "Well, Ladies and Gentlemen, we will put that argument on the shelf along with the rest."

He certainly made a great hit, and I do not recall that Jamieson had much to say to him. It was getting very late and the meeting eventually mizzled out in the way such meetings generally do. One sad result followed. A very nice young fellow sitting next to me had brought with him a huge lot of MS., and had striven in vain to catch the speaker's eye more than once during the debate. We kept him quiet until he seemed to be once more in control of himself.

But that night he developed violent religious mania and had to be placed under restraint. He was shipped off home, but, fortunately or unfortunately, let the *manes* of Jamieson and the Archdeacon decide the question, jumped overboard and was no more seen. One more proof of Cecil Rhodes' remark apropos of "Bobby" White and the Jamieson raid: "It only shows how careful one ought to be what you say to people." The poor fellow was probably on the borderland between sanity and insanity, and, as George R. Sims

once said about such cases, "something pushed him over." Was it Moule, Jamieson, or only Fate?

Amongst learned societies at Shanghai was the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, and as a rule its discussions were more instructive than amusing. However, on one occasion it was different. A very learned American Missionary had undertaken to give a lecture on the Buddhistic hells, hot and cold, with magic-lantern slide accompaniment. All went well and seriously until a picture appeared of victims with not much clothing on. It was no doubt in a hot hell. Unfortunately the operator had reversed the slide and the picture appeared upside-down. The audience began to titter, whereupon the lecturer, who was rather short-sighted, peered at the sheet and said, "Oh, I see, they have been put in bottoms upwards." I doubt if an Asiatic Society audience ever laughed so heartily before or since.

It was at Tientsin in 1887-88 that I first met P. G. von Möllendorff, who was then known as the "ex-King of Korea."

He was in exile at the time and very much down on his luck—with a wife and three children to support on a rather uncertain source of income. He was originally in the Chinese Customs Service, but left it to take on the job of organizing a similar institution for the King of Korea.

Seoul was at the time an unhealthy place to live in. Plots and counter-plots were the order of the day, and no man of any eminence could be quite sure of escape from the knife of an assassin. Von Möllendorff had a very narrow evasion of death at a banquet in the Palace, and soon afterwards accepted Li Hung-chang's offer to come to Tientsin and await events there. Li gave him a house and a small income, and meanwhile the Korean Customs passed into the hands of the great I.G. Von Möllendorff too passed into his hands again once more. Unwillingly enough, but needs must when the devil drives, he accepted the

humiliating conditions of re-employment dictated from Peking.

This was a truly Hartian touch. The ex-Chief of the Royal Korean Customs resuming duty as a junior assistant in the Shanghai Customs, followed later by an equally characteristic action in promoting him—after the lesson had been well and publicly rubbed in—to a more suitable post. The contrast between Detring and Von Möllendorff was striking. Detring with his “*grande tête du bourgeois*,” as a French journalist once described him, was a very different person from Von Möllendorff, a descendant of those Franconian knights who compelled the Borussi to become Prussians and Christians at the sword’s point. Their ambitions, however, were identical. Both aimed at leadership which neither could attain to. The ever-present man from the North of Ireland out-generated them both !

It was during my two years at Tientsin, 1887–89, that I first met Lo Fêng-luh, then Secretary to the Navy (Peiyang Fleet) under Viceroy Li Hung-chang.

The Custom House was being rebuilt and the Viceroy had placed a suite of rooms in the Admiralty offices at Detring’s disposal *ad interim*; we were thus brought into propinquity with all the officials of the Naval staff, of whom Lo was the chief. Lo’s room was close to mine and I saw a good deal of him. An ardent student and admirer of the Herbert Spencer philosophy and a highly cultured man in things Chinese, Lo was ever an interesting personality and exercised considerable influence in his own sphere of action.

But in dealing with so compelling a character as the Grand Secretary Li the entourage had ever to be on its guard against under-zeal and over-zeal alike. Li tolerated Western learning and ideas, but only so far as they did not clash with his own over-lordship of all within his boundaries.

The Frenchman, Giquel, the founder of the

Foochow Arsenal and Naval Base at Pagoda Anchorage, built the first foreign-type warships for the Chinese Navy, and the older Chinese Naval officers were mostly natives of the Fukien province, of which Foochow is the capital. It so came about, naturally enough, that in the Peiyang or Northern Fleet a goodly proportion of the Chinese *personnel*, especially amongst the officers, was composed of men trained in the Foochow establishments.

These people were known in the Fleet as the "Fukien-hui," in contradiction to similar "hui," angl, associations of fellow-provincials, hailing from Canton and Shantung and Anhui.

Inter-provincial jealousy is as marked in China as inter-State rivalry in the U.S.A. Li, from Anhui, a non-maritime province, well knew the value of setting one set of sailor-men against the other in governing the whole lot, and Lo was thus not seldom between the devil and the deep sea in running his end of the job.

He had all to do with the foreign side of the Fleet from Admiral Lang downwards, and I dare say more than once had occasion to recognize the cogency of one of the latest of the Master's sayings in *Man v. the State*, that the "conduct of human beings baulks calculation."

On Admiral Lang's retirement the Fleet gradually retrograded in fighting efficiency, and finally proved an easy morsel for the Japanese, with inferior ships, at the battle of the Yalu.

Lo became a diplomat and was Chinese Minister in London at the time of the Boxer trouble. I remember him saying some years afterwards: "*The Times* called me a cynical liar—or something choice of that sort—because I told the truth, or what I believed to be the truth, namely that no massacre of the Foreign Legations had taken place in Peking." He added: "When what I said turned out to be really a fact, nobody apologized. They were, I suppose, all too busy."

IN THE CHINESE CUSTOMS SERVICE

Poor Lo had a sad ending. For some time he had been threatened with a malignant growth in the lip, and in spite of, or was it because of, his Western knowledge steadfastly declined to entertain the idea of an operation. In common with many Chinese of the upper class, he had no fear of death, and explained in his whimsical way that probably it was because he was not a Christian and knew nothing either of the joys of Heaven or the penalties of the other place.

But for all that he was a faithful servant of the State, and died as a man should, with harness on his back.

CHAPTER VIII

Life in Chefoo in 1889-90—The Colin Jamieson disappearance—Home leave suggested by the Inspector-General—Reappointed to London Office—Anxiety regarding children left behind in China—Cruel uncertainty of London Office appointment—Transferred to Shanghai as " Acting " Deputy Commissioner—Postal Matters in Shanghai—Commissioner Louis Rocher's brilliant administration—The Shanghai Sample Room and what it did for the Revenue—The seizure of Kiaochow Bay by the Germans in 1897—I am instructed by the Shanghai Tao-tai to " drive them out "—The Customs Club and Gym—An interrupted assault-at-arms at the Theatre.

WE LEFT TIENTSIN for Chefoo in the spring of 1889. My name had been put forward to the I.G. by Detring as a suitable man for service in Korea. The Korean Customs were then staffed for the most part by "seconded" employees of the Chinese Customs, who received a handsome Korean addition to their normal pay. It was therefore a much-prized appointment for a junior in the Senior Service. Needless to say, both Detring and I were turned down, and the billet went to a man some years my junior in point of service. I was sent to Chefoo to fill the vacancy there caused by his appointment.

Chefoo has been called the Brighton of China, but has not much in common with the Queen of Watering Places. My new Commissioner was from the North of Ireland—a cousin of Robert Hart—but a man of a very different stamp. He had been a rancher in his time, a fine rider and a man of great muscular strength. The I.G. had alternately bullied and promoted him until he found himself, I dare say much to his own astonishment, a full-blown Commissioner of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs.

He and I got on well together, and as he was content to leave the conduct of affairs very much in my hands, there were no points of friction between us. But unfortunately with others it was not so. Besides possessing a violent and uncontrolled temper, he was also by nature and temperament unsympathetic towards the Chinese, by whom and with whom he lived. In the Chinese view he was classed as "li-hai," *anglice* "dangerous," and feared and disliked accordingly. He had also a bad record from other ports of ill-treating the Chinese. But as Fate ruled it, the cumulative effect of his sins fell not on his head but on that of another, and an innocent head at that. In the autumn of 1889 he obtained three months' leave. I naturally expected, and so did he and all others, that I should administer the port during his temporary absence; but Peking appointed the Kiungchow Commissioner, Colin Jamieson, to the vacant post. It was a bitter pill to me, after sixteen years' service, to find that apparently I could not be trusted to run a small port like Chefoo for a short period of three months; but I was little prepared for the tragedy that was to follow.

Colin Jamieson arrived and duly took charge. He was a perfect stranger to me, but a man very well known in the Service as an ex-Chief Secretary. He also hailed from the North of Ireland, and was a younger brother of Dr. R. A. Jamieson, of Shanghai. In appearance a tall, thin, middle-aged man, with the same reserved manner as distinguished his brother. I was with him in the office on the day of his arrival and for two subsequent days, but afterwards never saw him in life again.

He played billiards in the Club on the afternoon of the 31st October, and started down the East Beach for a walk soon afterwards. The next morning he did not appear in the office. I sent up to inquire about him, and received the astounding reply that he had not slept in the Commissioner's house that night. I

wondered, but still hoped he would turn up all right. However, he did not do so, and we soon had organized search parties out over the whole neighbourhood. The Customs Tao-tai at the time was the afterwards celebrated Sheng Hsüan-huai—one of Li Hung-chang's most trusted disciples. He and I worked together on the surface, *and under it*, but no trace of the missing man could be discovered. I wired the fact of the disappearance to the Inspector General, and received orders to take charge of the port—temporarily. A subsequent despatch directed me to search all the wells. This, of course, and many other things besides, had already been done, but the mystery remained as great as ever.

Meantime Dr. Jamieson had arrived from Shanghai, and a curious thing happened. At first he was vehement against his "brother's murderers" and embarrassed the British Consul not a little by the fabulous—to a Chinese—amount of reward he wished to offer for their apprehension. It does not do to suggest blood money too freely in the East, lest unexpected results follow. Seals had been placed on the few possessions Colin Jamieson had brought with him, amongst other things his despatch-box. It was after his brother had examined the contents of this box that we noticed a change in his attitude. He was no longer so insistent about *murder*, and eventually returned to Shanghai leaving the mystery still unsolved. But the *dénouement* came on the nineteenth day after the disappearance. An intimation—apparently from nowhere—stated that the body of the late Commissioner had been found on the beach at a point known as Forbes Bungalow, about two miles from the foreign settlement. Sure enough at the point indicated lay the body of poor Jamieson. It was fully clothed, but decomposition was far advanced. The skin of his head and neck had fallen round his throat like a King Charles' Vandyke collar. I noticed the ghastly look of his gold teeth. When the relief party came up we

attempted to move the body. The head rolled off at my feet amidst a shower of gold teeth, but we managed to get a sheet round him and so proceeded to the hospital, luckily not very far away. Here two doctors got to work at once, but decomposition was too far advanced for them to do much towards determining the cause of his death.

The scene recalled that awful tale of Monsieur Valdemar by Poe. As they looked on, the body melted into putrescence, but it was ascertained that the skull showed no mark of any blow—a fact that to my mind conveyed the impression that, *whatever had happened*, the unfortunate man had not been struck down and afterwards thrown into the water, the theory most favoured at the time. If he had been set upon and murdered by Chinese he would almost certainly have been felled to the ground in the first instance by a blow on the head with the sharp edge of a bamboo “carrying-pole,” and the skull would have been bruised if not fractured. At the inquest held at the British Consulate the jury returned a verdict of “Found Drowned, with no evidence to show how deceased got into the water.”

The funeral was conducted by the Customs Tao-tai, Sheng Hsüan-huai, who was greatly concerned at the untoward death of his new colleague. The body was carried to the grave, escorted by Chinese soldiers and officials, and buried in the presence of the greatest concourse of Chinese and foreigners ever seen in the quiet and picturesque little cemetery on Temple Hill.

Many were the theories at the time as to the cause and manner of the poor man's disappearance and death. The most readily believed was the somewhat fantastic tale that he was murdered by natives in mistake for his predecessor. This seemed to me *a priori* unlikely. In the first place the physical difference between the two men was such as to preclude the idea of mistaking one for the other, unless, of course, we adopt the very far-fetched assumption that both men were personally

unknown to the alleged slayers. The one was short, broad-shouldered and very sturdily built; the other a tall, thin man of very delicate physique. Assuming for the moment that there were people in the place whose dislike of the previous Commissioner was such as to prompt them to the attempt of taking his life, is it likely that his personal appearance would be unfamiliar to them, and if familiar, why should they have deliberately gone to work to kill a very different sort of man? There could be no point at all in such action, surmising that personal revenge and hatred were involved as motives.

Another theory, not altogether without plausibility, was that the outrage was the work of salt-smugglers. We had not long before made a very successful raid on a salt-smuggling *cache* in the basement of an unoccupied foreign house on Chefoo hill, and there had been threats of reprisals on the Customs staff. Had the salt-smugglers been implicated, I fancy that I should have been their objective and not the Commissioner, because it was well known who had planned and brought about their discomfiture. So, to paraphrase the Yankee Missionary before referred to: "We must put that argument on the shelf along with the others."

Meanwhile Sheng and I continued to work on in secret, and were even making some progress at unravelment when the return of the previous Commissioner to his post on the expiration of his three months' leave introduced complications which were insuperable. As before described, he was a man of violent and determined character. His first act was to cause the erection in his garden of a tinplate target roughly shaped as a man, and he used to riddle it with bullets from his six-shooter *coram populo* every day. He was in fact quite a danger to any casual caller who had not been previously warned that "target practice" was on. Moreover, he always carried his "gun" on him, and was almost as good a hand with it as the

celebrated Bill Hart of later-day "movie-picture" fame. Now the essential in our search was *quiet*; to let the whole matter die down while patiently working underneath the surface. This was now clearly impossible.

My home leave was due. I applied and it was granted. The strain on myself and wife had been very great—made still more grievous by the loss of our eldest son, who died after one day's illness on the 16th January, 1890. Fortunately his grandfather, the late Rev. Alex Williamson, LL.D., was residing in Shanghai at the time, and we were able to arrange for the other children to remain in Chefoo—we did not expect to be away from China longer than one year—in charge of our dear old friend and theirs, Miss Downing, in her charming house on Temple Hill, and under his guardianship.

The Colin Jamieson affair clouded the close of our stay in Chefoo, but previously to that terrible incident life had been pleasant enough. We had a nice house and congenial friends. I recall especially Lange, the German Consul, Mr. and Mrs. Bristowe at the British Consulate, Eckford of Cornabé & Co. and his wife with the wonderful voice, Percy Lavers, H. J. Clark, and many others. Of course we founded a "Gym." To do so was chronic with me where'er I walked, and a very successful "Gym" it was too, in a large room in my house, with overflow into the garden. We boxed and fenced, and did mighty feats on the horizontal bar. Chefoo was a great place for summer visitors, and I recall very pleasant times at our Gym with those two famous girl athletes, the Misses Bush of Newchwang, who were equally famous for good looks. Altogether pleasant to look back upon now time has softened other sorrows.

But the I.G. had been as usual incalculable. He wrote a line of sympathy on the death of our son, but his final letter did much to neutralize it. In it he said I should do well to take leave, as he would

be unable to place me in charge again for a year or two. There was a vague hint of reappointment to London. Enough to unsettle, but very far from any definite promise, and we left the children behind, because it was the best thing to be done at the time both for them and us. We had no money saved and no likelihood of ever having any, but a rest of some sort was imperative, and I looked upon it as life insurance. So home we went, *via* Japan and San Francisco, doing Salt Lake City, Royal Canyon, Denver, Chicago, and Niagara *en route* to New York. We were held up in New York for three weeks—waiting for a steamer on which our tickets to England would be available for cabin accommodation without extra charge. One hundred gold dollars extra was demanded, but we elected to spend the money on hotels and sights in the Empire City rather than surrender to the rapacity of the steamship lines.

Once again in London we got into quiet lodgings in Bloomsbury. Time passed rapidly, and soon we had to get together our outfit for the return journey to China. We were on the eve of starting and a week later should have been away, when a telegram was received at the London Office reappointing me there. Next day I was back there and at work. The confirming despatch described my appointment as “temporary,” and I was thus prevented from making any arrangements for our children to be sent home to us. The lamented death of their grandfather in Chefoo introduced another complication. A year passed and my temporary status still continued. In the third year I got the eldest boy home. Not long afterwards my transfer to China was received, but left in abeyance at the request of Mr. Campbell. The Chinese-Japanese War was waging and the head of the London Office had his hands too full of other matters to wish for any new blood in his office just then. When the war was over I was again transferred to China and again retained at the request of my local Chief. On

that occasion I remember I had packed up and taken farewell of the office when the laconic telegram "Retain King" reached it. Our (third) voyage outfit had to be scrapped, and we were again on the sea of uncertainty regarding our children in China—rendered still more poignant by the death of our elder daughter at the Chefoo School from scarlatina—following typhoid fever—in 1893. The I.G.'s "iron" had, indeed, entered deep into our souls, and we marvelled, as many others have done before and since, that so great a man could also be so petty. How easy for "a benevolent despot" to have lightened the burden of a man who had at least always given to his work the best that was in him. A word to define the duration of my stay in London. That was all. But it never came.

My second period of the London Office extended from February 1891 to June 1896, and included three transfers—the last only effective. It was laconic as usual. "King Shanghai. Wanted forthwith." In the preceding seven years—March 1889 to February 1896—no promotion had come my way until a few weeks before leaving for Shanghai. The work in the office had been long and continuous. I can recall but one brief period of holiday (fifteen days in 1895 to be exact) and thirty-five days' sick leave, the sum-total of my "absences" during the whole of my term.

My appointment on arrival was Acting Deputy Commissioner in the Shanghai Office. My new Commissioner was Louis Rocher—a Frenchman and one of the most brilliant of those Customs men who had helped to build up the I.G.'s reputation as well as his Service. But, as was once wittily expressed by the late John Chambers (the builder of the new Custom House at Shanghai) apropos of R. H.'s characteristics: "The Lord our God is a jealous God." Rocher often found it so, and so did H. Kopsch, the Statistical Secretary and entrusted with the duties of Postal Secretary.

INCEPTION OF CHINESE POSTS

The Chinese Postal Service was then in its infancy and was being run by the Inspector General, who, like Queen Victoria, had added to his title and was now described as "Inspector General of Customs and Posts." The postal work at the ports was carried on by the local Commissioners of Customs, styled also "Postmasters," to reward them by added dignity for having to do double duty on no extra pay. The suffering Customs Accountants had to run the Postal Accounts and keep track of the stamps and also work overtime, all for the honour and glory of the thing of which only the very palest reflection ever seemed to reach the real workers in the ports. Naturally Shanghai rapidly became a large postal centre. Rocher had to improvise everything. The first Post Office was in the courtyard of the new Custom House, in buildings of the glorified shed type. His urgent representations to Peking were generally met by a baffling silence—most exasperating to a man of his sanguine and active nature. But he worked on and made his share of the undertaking a huge success. But nevertheless it wore him out. A less conscientious man would have taken less out of himself, and perhaps lived longer in consequence.

Rocher retired early from the Customs Service and did not survive long. He and I were always good friends, but one day we nearly fell out—not the fault of either of us. On the 20th February, 1897, I received a telegram from Peking :

"Promoted Deputy Commissioner. Congratulations. Hart."

It was a "birthday promotion." The I.G. was born on the 20th February, 1835, and such anniversary promotions were then not uncommon, and naturally much thought of by the lucky recipients. I, of course, wired back at once grateful thanks and birthday good wishes. The telegram arrived on Saturday late in the evening, and I had no opportunity of telling Rocher about it, but naturally assumed that he would

also have been telegraphically instructed. I could not understand his silence when we met on Monday morning, and after a pause told him about the I.G. message. I then learnt to my astonishment that he knew nothing about it and that no official news of my promotion had been received. He said: "It would have been a great pleasure to me to have handed you your promotion and I am sorry the I.G. has deprived me of it." He added very bitterly: "But I suppose he intended to show you and me that it had nothing to do with anything I may have said about you."

To promote a subordinate without informing his immediate superior was, to say the least of it, a remarkable breach of official etiquette, but Rocher's comment revealed to me its "true inwardness." A new turn to *Divide et impera* with the accent on the divide! The idea of *Albion perfide* is seldom absent from a Frenchman's mind, and I could see that Rocher doubted my loyalty and was inclined to think that I had been scheming "on my own" behind his back. It quite spoilt my pleasure in the step that meant so much for me, but I think he saw in my face that my chagrin was as real as his own and that his suspicions were unfounded. Still, if the wily old gentleman in Peking had planned to part us he could hardly have devised a better way!

But as things were Rocher and I worked on very pleasantly together. He conceived the very excellent idea of a sample-room in the Shanghai Custom House—a place where specimens and letterpress descriptions of all the more important articles of import and export could be on view for the enlightenment of everybody concerned. With the able assistance of Examiner George Murray I got the new departure into working order, and it soon became a very useful adjunct to the work of the Indoor and Outdoor departments. Samples of goods had, of course, always been kept in the Examiners' offices at the various

sheds and wharves, but they were incomplete and not generally accessible. The sample-room was designed to focus, so to speak, the whole of the available information, and add to it from day to day. Very soon a marked effect on values and the subsequent duty levy was observable. I have no longer the exact figures before me, but they ran into thousands of taels and amply justified the existence of the sample-room if justification were needed. We were also able, in connection with the Returns Department of the Shanghai Office, to introduce a Scrutiny Desk, at which a certain percentage of the duty calculations on each application to import or export was carefully gone over and re-checked. The number of errors that escaped in the rush of business, even the meticulous system of duty checking in vogue at all Custom Houses, was surprising. I got the idea from a somewhat similar system introduced by William Whiteley and found to work advantageously in his vast undertaking.

Rocher knew the Customs Service from end to end, and was besides a man of ideas and imagination. It was therefore a real pleasure to work with him and as his Deputy Commissioner carry out much-needed reforms. We attacked the fraudulent re-exports, and by liberality in rewards and inviolable secrecy soon attracted the right sort of information, by which I mean *specific* information, i.e. that such and such an application to re-export, alleged to cover certain foreign imports on which a high duty had been assessed, really covered worthless rubbish. One example must suffice.

Foreign brass buttons carried a heavy import duty, and we noticed an increasing re-export of them to Japan. Drawbacks of foreign goods to foreign ports were entitled to a cash drawback, and, unlike foreign goods sent to Chinese ports, no subsequent re-examination was feasible. Therefore once the fraudulent shipment had left port, no one could dispute its *bona fides*. A very merry trade was carried on in

consequence. I remember writing a skit for my own amusement in which it was shown that Shanghai was not only a free port but even occasionally gave back more import duty than had been originally collected. It was of course not quite like that, although the loss of revenue was very considerable. On the conviction of one foreign firm of "pao-kuan," i.e. people who lived by passing goods belonging to others through the Custom House, the Custom Tao-tai, Rocher's Chinese colleague, did a very spirited thing. He confiscated the whole of the outstanding drawbacks due to the firm and left them to seek a remedy in the Consular Courts. Needless to say, they entered no plaint, but ostentatiously went out of business, only to reappear again under another name. Still the lesson was salutary and well deserved, and, no doubt, gave pause to the many fellow-sinners concerned. The question of "secret service" had never been really faced up to. Robert Hart disliked seizures, and seemed to distrust the discretion of the seizing officers and the *bona fides* of informers. Possibly his Irish blood had something to do with it, but be that as it may, he never really seemed to be sympathetic to the new activities in Shanghai. Incidentally, too, some important toes had been trodden upon, and some of my exploits had been protested against by smaller German traders to their Minister in Peking. The big German houses were always with me, as it was greatly to their interest to check the inroads on their trade made by compatriots who, it was always asserted, found their compensation in carrying through frauds on the Customs on behalf of Chinese clients, and consequently worked for considerably less than the statutory commission. If these little people could be kept out of the market, it was obvious that the larger houses would benefit.

Fraudulent invoices to support duty values on import were also a cause of much loss of revenue. Invoices in the German language and written in

German characters were particularly tough morsels for the Duty Memo Desk and the Examining Staff. My training in a German Commission house in London had made much plain to me that was obscure to others, and I was always willing to go through the documents—point by point—with the importer, not always to his satisfaction. The German Consul-General came to see me one day with reference to a certain case. He was very frank and so was I, and after he had been shown the whole record of the particular case and also some others by the same firm, he smiled blandly and said he did not think he should feel inclined to intervene in future. He was a trained Jurist and a man of high character, and I was very glad of the opportunity of making Customs action plain to him. I knew, of course, the difficulties of his position, and the danger to a Consul's reputation should too many accusations of slackness in upholding German interests be received direct at the Foreign Office in Berlin.

It was in the winter of 1897 that the German Fleet anchored in Kiaochow Bay, landed there in some force, drove out the Chinese troops and occupied their barracks. It so happened that I was in temporary charge of the Shanghai Customs at the time, as Rocher was "up country" shooting. He was a noted shot and very fond of it. There was, of course, a good deal of local excitement, but as China and Germany were at peace at the time, and afterwards, I could not see my way towards devising, as requested to do by the Customs Tao, "means to drive them out"! The "wires" soon produced a *modus vivendi*, eventually to end in the long lease of the occupied territory, and also more besides, to the Germans. But although the occupation had been bloodless as far as the aggressors were concerned, they paid a heavy toll in deaths and disease from the insanitary state of the Chinese barracks they had utilized in a hurry, as the weather was very cold, without adequate fumigation.

Robert Hart was never one not to bow to the inevitable, and, as the Chinese recognized that what had happened was for the moment at least without remedy, it was comparatively easy for him to advise, and for them to accept submission !

My duties as Deputy Commissioner left me little leisure, but we managed to revive at least something of the old-time "Gym." The Main Guard of the 'Eighties had been improved away, but we started in a small room kindly lent by the Asiatic Society, and did a certain amount of boxing and fencing. We also combined with the Shanghai Volunteers in a grand assault-at-arms in the Lyceum Theatre. Inspector Mellows and I—in appropriate costumes—contributed a "rapier-and-dagger" fight in the old Italian style, and were well received by a large and fashionable audience. During the early 'Nineties in London I had been associated a good deal with the late Captain Alfred Hutton, K.D.G., an acknowledged master in old sword-play. He was an expert in handling the weapons of a bygone age, and he and I did much ancient fence together. I was thus able to supply the necessary "local colour" for our Shanghai show. Inspector Mellows, formerly R.N., was a man of tremendous physique, and proved himself a very apt pupil. But on the night in question there was a *divertissement* of another kind. The "General Alarm" suddenly sounded, and both audience and players had to hurry away. The threatened "wheelbarrow riot" had taken shape and soon the streets were filled with armed police and volunteers. I had retired from active service, but hurried to the Custom House and Post Office to see for myself how matters were going. It was lucky I did so, for I found the postal officer in the act of transferring the outgoing mails from his waggon to a sampan to avoid the supposed danger of rioters on the steamer wharves. I commended him for his foresight, but decided the risk was greater on water than on land, as the steamers

would have no gangways lowered on the river side and no facilities for hoisting in a heavy mail. So we proceeded together to the Chinese Merchants' Wharves in French Town, and got the mails safely on board in the usual way without molestation. The rioters were no doubt well posted, and understood that adventures in streets and wharves in the foreign quarters were not likely to be healthy when so many "foreign soldiers" were about. But I must confess I was glad when I got to bed in the early hours, for it so happened that a large transshipment of case oil was to be effected in the morning, and the oil boats were all round the Wharf. It would have been fatally easy to start a disastrous fire. But luckily in China, and especially in the days before the populace had become accustomed to the use of foreign fire-arms, a show of force was generally sufficient to ward off any danger of having to use it.

CHAPTER IX

I study Japanese sword-play at Shanghai—"Secret Service" work—My activities cut short by transfer to Hangchow in charge—Houseboat trip up the Grand Canal—Hangchow Foreign Settlement a malarious swamp—My wife's serious illness—The I.G. assumes charge of the Likin Collection—The beauty of Pao Shu T'a and the Western Lake—The explosion of the Powder Magazine—City miraculously saved from destruction—Visit Peking on short leave—Results in transfer to Kowloon.

BY THE KINDNESS of the Japanese Consul-General I was enabled about this time to study Japanese sword-play under the tuition of his Inspector of Police, a noted swordsman. I had rented a room in the Kiangsi Road to store my books, as we were living in two rooms at the old Central, now Palace Hotel, and had barely space to turn round, and this room soon became a centre of Anglo-Japanese fence.

I shall never forget my first introduction to the Inspector of Police. I think his name was Mori. He spoke no English or Chinese, but a Japanese friend kindly acted as interpreter. Mori's manners were the pink of Samurai courtesy, and his subsequent sword-play was a revelation. We bowed low three times to each other, while squatting on our haunches each with a long Japanese bamboo "practice" sword, grasped in both hands. We then stood up, facing one another. He then showed me how to hold the sword, and when I naturally took the "middle guard" he stopped and made me another bow. I was quite puzzled, but the interpreter explained: "He wants to say he perceives that you are a fencer." I could only make him a low bow. A short conversation

followed and the interpreter continued: "Mr. Mori says he will only give you lessons on one condition. If you will teach him all the foreign fencing you know, he will similarly teach you all he knows of the Japanese art." I accepted with enthusiasm, and the lesson proceeded.

Although short he was powerfully built, with the cat-like agility of the Japanese athlete. We soon got on well together, and I was duly initiated into the beauties of the "pear-splitter" and the "entrail-evacuating" body blow. The former is a head cut and is designed to cleave the pear-shaped crest on a Japanese helmet—hence the name—split the skull in two and bury itself in the shoulder. Quite a satisfying *coup*, but nothing to the body blow which cuts the trunk almost in twain in best Nibelung style. It is accompanied by a blood-curdling yell, meant to reproduce the sound of the entrails being torn out as the sword leaves the body! "Some fence," my masters! The *fleuret* seemed tame after this, and the *épée* had the drawback in Japanese eyes of not being a cut-and-thrust weapon. So the little man elected to learn the Italian sabre—French style—and soon mastered that most useful of the three *armes*. Japanese fencing caught on at once, and my little room was frequently overcrowded with exponents of the art—both foreign and Nippon style. Mr. Komuro, the local head of a large Japanese Steamship Company, to whom I am indebted for many hints as to the etiquette of the art in Japan, was another revelation to me. To all outward seeming a middle-aged Japanese gentleman of the successful commercial type, with gold-rimmed spectacles, high shoulders and very mild manners, he one day—after saying he was much out of practice—donned a suit of bamboo armour and said he would not mind having a short bout with me. We fell on guard and the next moment all traces of the sedate merchant disappeared and the fighting-man of Japan stood forth. We danced in and out

and dealt blows that would have done credit to Little John and the Cook, and eventually agreed to draw the battle just as they did. But to me the matter had more significance. It seemed to reveal in a flash the essential difference between Japanese and Chinese, Orientals both and in their superficial dealings with foreigners not unlike. But scratch the one and you find the Tartar—while the other, even if deeply moved, remains always a philosopher. “Watch Japan,” said the late Lord Northcliffe; but he would have done well to add, especially for the benefit of his American friends, “Don’t irritate her either.”

However, to revert for a moment to the actual art as practised in Japan. It has some points of vantage over foreign fence, but in many ways is less interesting and less scientific. The old French adage, “Silence sous les Armes,” is unknown. On the contrary, as soon as the combatants fall on guard, provocative ejaculations and ear-piercing “cries” are indulged in. The bout may even end in a “rough and tumble,” swords discarded and victory given to the one who tears off his opponent’s helmet by main force. A truly marvellous *corps-à-corps*! It has, however, the advantage of using both hands on the sword and gives larger and more natural scope for footwork than is allowable under European rules. We are all familiar with the favourite caricature of “Monsieur le Président” of the Cercle d’Escrime, always depicted in a tight-fitting frockcoat and showing a slight *courbature* of the spinal column. There is more truth in this than fencers are inclined to admit, and it is a pity that “left-handers” and “right-handers” cannot be merged into ambidextrous performers. The Japanese fencer, unlike his foreign brother, has a perfectly balanced body. Right arm, right leg and thigh, and foot no bigger than the left. Few foreign fencers can show a like result, and unless they happen to be boxers as well, are comparatively weak on the left side of the body. But in other

matters foreign fence is more in accordance with the amenities of sport. What with “terror-inspiring yells” and the smashing sound of the Japanese practice sword—composed of four sections of bamboo neatly fitted and lashed together—on the defensive armour, also made of bamboo, though the helmet is of iron, the din is terrific. I remember in the midst of a lively combat a peremptory knock on the door was followed by the irruption into my room of Inspector Howard of the Shanghai Municipal Police, attended by two of his stalwart myrmidons, then mostly recruited from the Glasgow police force. He was an old friend, and having no idea of who occupied the premises, was not a little surprised to find the Shanghai Deputy Commissioner in quite another character altogether. He explained that our Chinese neighbours were terrified at the noise and thought people were being murdered. I dare say it sounded something like that on the street below. The Inspector, a well-known local sport, was invited to take a hand, but he preferred to act as referee only. Noise is of course a nuisance anywhere, and especially out of place when games are in progress (witness the lamentable displays of partisanship in baseball and the too-audible comments on the play that are now creeping into cricket). But in Japanese fencing the noise is confined to the actual combatants and has both purpose and meaning, and I have it on the authority of the well-known film-actor, Sessue Hayakawa—himself a noted fencer—that the mutual defiances of Japanese fencers, besides having the sanction of high antiquity, are distinctly inspiring. As Mr. Mori became more expert with the sabre, we often indulged in mixed combats, i.e. he would take sabre against me with the Japanese sword, or I would fight him with the *épée* and run the risk of being done to death by a “pear-splitter” before I could get in a point on his hand or body. These sorts of mixed combats became very popular between us. He could generally

hold his own against me—except with the *épée*, a weapon to which he had a most marked distaste. The “point” has little place in Japanese sword-play, and the two-handed weapon is far better for offence than defence. In fact, real combats are frequently ended in Kilkenny-cat fashion by a devastating *coup double*, and practice-play is also much marred by the same defect. Sessue Hayakawa, who is a student of foreign books, smiled gently over my reference to Molière’s “Bourgeois Gentilhomme.” “Ah, la belle science, y donnez et y point recevoir,” and explained that the risk of a mutual kill was part of the ethics of duelling in Japan. The justification for taking another man’s life lay in willingness to sacrifice one’s own in the process.

I liked the idea, because it exactly chimed in with a secret joy of my own. When I cross swords with a man in play I always try to imagine that our weapons are pointed and deadly, and that one must play as Wesley said man must live—as if the present hour were his last! It certainly gives a zest to the bout, and one can even tolerate a bore—a specimen not unknown in fencing circles—if one can imagine one is out to kill him!

But my little room in the Kiangsi Road had other uses. It was there that I was wont to interview “informers” who did not care to risk their skins by being seen anywhere near the Deputy Commissioner’s Office at the Custom House. Like Nathaniel they came by night and by stealth, trusting to me entirely. There were never any witnesses, and the “search party” used to wonder how it was done. But done it was, and they were seldom put on a fruitless quest. My terms were for “specific” information and no other. The seizures were made on board the vessel concerned within a few hours of her departure, thus leaving no time to warn anybody of what was going to happen. The work was interesting, and might have been much extended had

the great I.G. been more sympathetic to the well-meant efforts of his lieutenants in Shanghai.

Soon after my appointment to Shanghai, Detring, my old Tientsin Chief, who doubtless had in mind his former experiences of my willingness to work for the sake of work, gave me a useful hint. "Take care not to become too much of a factotum, or you will never be a Commissioner." It was good advice and well meant. On my appointment the I.G. had written: "Your business is to ease the Commissioner's hands in every direction," and of course there is always a danger of becoming a factotum, because locally useful. Witness in the late War how difficult it was for "stripes" to get a commission under such conditions. But my promotion was brought about otherwise. Complaints had been laid before the Minister of a certain nation in Peking that Mr. Deputy Commissioner King "had a down" on the goods of the nationals concerned, and was subjecting them to special examination treatment. I had already received a friendly warning from one of them—a Shanghai merchant of high standing whose withers were unwrung, because it was unnecessary, by my activities. So I was not astonished when two things happened. First, a transfer to Hangchow—a notoriously unhealthy port, and second, an appointment as "Acting" Commissioner only. This latter was a decided hint from above, as I had then some twenty-four years' service to my credit and might presumably have been held qualified by length of service, age, experience, and previous record for a substantive appointment. But I was, of course, glad to get an independent post on almost any terms, although at the time neither my wife nor I fully realized what was before us. We had at great expense, owing to the ruinous exchange, sent our children home, so were in comparatively light marching order, and the extra pay was very welcome, even if only "Acting." So to Hangchow we went in the spring of 1898, embarking at the Customs jetty and joining what was

then known as "the train," i.e. houseboats of native and foreign style in tow of a steam launch. The route was up-river for a short space, and then *via* the Grand Canal to our destination. It was an interesting trip through a part of China we had never before visited. One passes through some of the Gordon country of Taiping days, with its ancient cities, wonderful bridges and unforgettable horrors. Kashing, as we saw it outside the walls at daybreak, was especially impressive.

On arrival at Hangchow I found my predecessor fully packed up and in a somewhat "panicky" frame of mind. He suffered greatly from gout and had been moving Heaven and Earth, or in other words the great I.G., of whom he was a fellow-countryman, to get out of the place. I was not surprised, and could hardly blame him when a nearer view had revealed to me the actual state of affairs in the delectable spot assigned by the Chinese authorities for the foreign settlement and port of Hangchow. It was opened to foreign trade ostensibly by the Chinese themselves, as were Soochow and other so-called "Marts," but the whole action was no doubt a reflex from the unsuccessful war with Japan in 1895. My predecessor had "opened the port" in 1897, and the building of the Custom House and a general laying out of a roadway on the Canal front of the tract known as the general foreign settlement had been carried out under his supervision. The site selected was six miles from Hangchow, the city made known to the Western world by the famous Venetian, Marco Polo, and was close to the Hangchow end of the Grand Canal. It had formerly been in the occupation of Chinese, and was covered with the mulberry-trees for which the district is noted. These men were all evicted from their villages. They left in high dudgeon and ripped up the whole landscape in the process. Not a tree nor a blade of anything was left behind—nothing but empty fields. Still, no harm would have ensued had

the land been left as they left it. It was dry and as sanitary as other similar spots in China. But the danger of disturbing the old bones of China is proverbial and was fully illustrated in this instance.

The general foreign settlement had been pegged out into square lots of uniform size and duly reduced to a ground plan. No sooner was the ground plan printed and published than a period of speculation set in. People in Shanghai, with vague notions of fortunes made in land in the early days of its history, eagerly bought up the lots at the Government price. In order, however, that these lots should acquire value it was necessary that roads should be laid out within their area, and pressure was put on the Chinese local authorities to undertake the required work. A foreign engineer was engaged, and he commenced to construct a bund along the Canal front and some connecting roads. These of course had to be above the high-water level of the Canal, and required to be a good deal higher than the surrounding territory. To effect this he commenced to deepen the creek running across the area into the Grand Canal, and made foundations for the "laying-out" work from the spoil thus recovered. It was a deadly job for all concerned. The disturbed soil became a hotbed of malaria, and the mosquitoes did the rest. "Hoist by his own petard" the engineer was one of the first victims of the epidemic that followed and remained. Only his youth and magnificent constitution saved his life, but he resigned soon afterwards and did not return.

Others were not so lucky, and our small body of foreign residents—consisting of the Customs Staff and one foreign Municipal Police Inspector—had to face the conditions as best it could. The miserable part of the whole business was that it was unnecessary and created for us by the greed of Shanghai speculators who took good care never to visit their property. But it was fatally easy and cheap as well to dig out the creeks rather than bring down sanitary earth from

the not-far-distant hills, and had disastrous results to the poor bearers of the White Man's burden. Dr. Main, the well-known pioneer of foreign medicine and surgery in that part of the Chekiang province, lived in the city of Hangchow, as did all the other foreign missionaries. It is a beautifully situated city, and foreigners had existed there healthfully and happily for many years before its opening to foreign trade. I remember his first visit to us in the newly built Commissioner's house in the foreign settlement. We stood on the upper verandah and looked over the dreary swamps that extended all round the compound. He said, perhaps not so scientifically as he would now, "Every time you open the window you suck in malaria. The compound is reeking with it."

And so in very truth it turned out. The staff sickened, even the Chinese suffered terribly with "chills and fever." The lifeless look of their skins revealed the poison in their bodies. My wife fell an early victim. We moved her out to some low hills at the famous Pao Shu T'a, or Needle Pagoda, where Dr. Main had built a small house in foreign style, and here she lay for ten days between life and death. It was a long ride from Hangchow City, the gates of which were closed at sundown and no one permitted in or out until next morning. Dr. Main was himself ill at the time, and I remember one dreadful Sunday afternoon when he sat utterly crushed with his head on his hand and said, "I fear I can do no more for your wife." I said, "Then I will go on with my 'swabs.'" I was always a believer in hydropathy, and had studied the Smedley hot "fever pack," that has saved so many lives at its headquarters in Matlock. My only helper was an old Chinese woman. That night we cut off all my wife's long hair, in order to relieve the heat at the back of her neck—the spot, according to Smedley, where fever can be best attacked by the only cold-water application allowed in his "hot-pack" system. She was unconscious,

and, apparently, at the point of death. But we persevered all night, and in the morning there was a slight diminution of temperature. After ten days of acute suffering—only those who have been through it know the awfulness of malarial fever—she came back once more to taking notice of what was going on round her, but to this day has never fully thrown off the results of the fever and the collapse it leaves behind.

However, although I have been ill often enough in China, I was never a feverish subject. Malaria at Hangchow was in my case manifested by a crop of hard and very painful carbuncular boils, but so long as I was able to sit my pony and rescue cargo from the clutches of my Likin rivals, I found solace in my work. A full description of the foreign settlement at Hangchow at the time of which I write will be found in a sketch entitled, "Neatly Laid Out."—*Anglo-Chinese Sketches*, by William A. Rivers (Kelly & Walsh, Ltd., Shanghai).

We were, of course, concerned to make a good showing for the new port, and it could only be done by an adaptation of the old scheme of "robbing Peter to pay Paul." Peter, otherwise the Likin collector, was in possession and gathered a rich harvest from all the silk and tea for which Hangchow is justly famous, so Paul of the Customs had to skirmish round the Likin barriers and see that no cargo destined for his net was unduly delayed by his Likin brother. Later on the I.G. played a big coup and undertook the collection of Likin in the province of Chekiang and elsewhere in China, under the supervision of specially detached Likin Deputy Commissioners. It was part of my work to prepare the way for their coming. The Governor of Chekiang was an amiable but rather old-fashioned official and was much disturbed at the intrusion of a foreign element into the affairs of his province. He, however, put the best face he could on the matter and delegated to the Provincial Treasurer

the task of arranging with the Port Commissioner as to how it was to be carried out. We had several meetings, and gradually it was evolved, much to his satisfaction, that the new "Control" would be fully contented if the fixed monthly quota were punctually forthcoming for remittance to Shanghai for ultimate distribution to the foreign banks concerned. It should be explained that by a departure from former procedure Likin—a purely inland tax—had been accepted as part security for foreign loans not considered to be fully secured on the revenue of the Maritime Customs. The policy of accepting Likin—a tax the legality of which had never been recognized and always protested about—as security was much commented upon at the time, and in so far as its acceptance as collateral security might be held to be a recognition of it as a legitimate source of revenue, was rightly enough objected to. It was put forward at the moment as an excuse for its acceptance that possibly the introduction of the methods of the Maritime Customs into matters of internal taxation might have in it the germs of general Civil Service reform.

Whether the Inspector General was actuated by any consideration of this sort is not clear, but it certainly was not present in the minds of the financiers who stipulated for, or rather accepted, it as part collateral security. Moreover, there was no hint of any ulterior motive in any of the Inspector General's Circulars or other instructions to his newly appointed Likin Deputy Commissioners. On the contrary, they were strictly enjoined not to interfere with the native administrators. Neither did they. The control was only in certain areas and was principally concerned with salt, but in any and every case its money requirements were punctually met, and no doubt the Likin authorities speedily found ways and means for recouping themselves at least in part for their involuntary support of foreign loans. No questions were asked, or if asked, nothing ever came of them, and

peace reigned in consequence. Altogether a most successful and happy solution of a difficult problem.

By September my wife was considered well enough to return to our quarters in the Foreign Settlement. We had previously vacated the house on Pagoda Hill in order to make room for the Likin Deputy Commissioner and staff, but had secured a very picturesque cottage close by. We left the hills and the West Lake with real regret not only because it was healthy there, but also on account of the lovely situation. Often on a Sunday afternoon one could sit for hours watching the magical effects of the lights and shadows on the City, Lake and far-off Chien-tang River. Moonlight revealed other aspects, but all of enthralling beauty. Below, the Lake with its wonderful Causeway across which Marco Polo must often have ridden, and the old Imperial Library, the ruined Thunder Pagoda on the opposite shore, the City with its Temples and Bridges, and beyond the River like a silver band outside its dark walls. Over the whole a Witchery and a Presence. No wonder Chinese poets of all ages have sung its praises. But for us it was "back to the settlement again," with Pao Shu T'a as a week-end joy only.

It was towards the end of the year (1898) that my wife and I were sitting quietly at home. She was writing Christmas cards and I was reading. Suddenly there was a tremendous shock. It was as if some vulcan had dealt the house a smashing blow. The verandah doors and the windows of our room blew open. The swinging oil lamps were torn from their attachments and dashed to pieces against the wall. Utter darkness prevailed and we crept about amongst the shattered glass, not knowing what further disaster might be coming. I got out on the verandah and looked towards the city, about six miles distant. Against the skyline an immense column of black smoke was slowly rising and gave me at once a clue to what had happened. The provincial powder

magazine, situated in the angle of the city wall immediately facing our way, must have blown up. It was long past closing-time at the city gates, but late at night news of an alarming nature began to filter in. The whole city was in ruins, several *wan* (10,000) of people had perished, etc., etc. We passed a wretched night, for we feared what might have happened not only to the city we had learnt to love for its beauty, but also to our many friends—foreign and native—residing therein. At daylight I was on horseback and riding headlong citywards. The gates were still closed and the soldiers on the walls shouted that no one could come in. But of course I soon settled that, and promptly made my way to the scene of the disaster. Luckily the powder magazine was, or rather had been, of foreign type. Not a vestige of it remained, only deep chasms in the earth where the solid brickwork had been. But the fact that it had been constructed far below the level of the city wall and was contained between thick embankments of unyielding earth had contracted all lateral air expansion until above the low roofs of the surrounding houses. When expansion took place it ripped off the tiles in all directions, but left the houses beneath untouched. The whole of the solid portion of the magazine had been blown in great lumps over the city wall, and fell into the swampy and waste land there, razing the wall parapets in its passage, but otherwise doing no harm.

No one was on the spot. In China it is not healthy to be found near a disaster. I rode down into the deep pit and up the retaining-wall, and noticed that the fringe of young bamboos planted round their summit was waving about as usual; like unto China itself, which bends but does not break. With a mind somewhat relieved by what I had seen, I rode off to the Roman Catholic Orphanage. The good Sister met me at the door and said, "Oh, Monsieur King, come in and see how *le bon Dieu* has taken care of us!" I went upstairs and there were

EXPLOSION OF GUNPOWDER MAGAZINE

all the little beady-eyed orphans sitting on their beds, and apparently none the worse for the fact that the roof was badly holed in all directions. I hurried off to the Protestants, and found less damage but the same faith in the care of the Divine Father. But was it imagination, or did I observe a slight nuance on the upturned face of the matron-in-charge when I told how the great works of God had been equally displayed in the R.C. Compound? No, of course, it was my imagination only.

I rode on to Dr. Main's famous hospital. Very few cases and none serious. What on earth had become of the several *wan* of dead and mutilated citizens? So I went about to see for myself. The streets everywhere were littered with broken tiles, but there were no other traces of disaster. On the way home I visited the magazine again and secured the personal attendance, by chasing him to a standstill, of a man in soldier's garb. He said he was a guard, and his very guarded statements amply bore him out. To put him at ease I asked him if he had blown up the magazine, a sally that set him off laughing. Then with many a "K'ung-p'a this" and "K'ung-p'a that," he told me a fairly collected story: That there were only five men on the premises at the time, and added, rather unnecessarily, that he did not know what had become of them.

However, as it turned out, that was the whole tale of the dead, a wonderful record for 600 tons of gunpowder let loose in a city of 1,000,000 inhabitants.

Our Likin colleagues on the hill had experienced a good jolt, and to this day it is a marvel to me that the Needle Pagoda withstood the shock. The base had been considerably worn away, and it always had a sort of Pisa-tower look, but, possibly, it too was "protected," and "Feng-shui" not going to be outdone by any foreign-made Divinity.

CHAPTER X

Visit Peking and obtain a transfer to Kowloon—Visit of Prince and Princess Heinrich of Prussia to Hangchow—Bishop Moule of Mid-China—Sad end of our Hangchow pals, "Weetie Monk" and a black kitten—Leave Hangchow—Hong-Kong—Visit Viceroy T'an at Canton—How we settled the boundary question on the extension of British territory in Kowloon—My wife's health breakdown necessitates a voyage home.

I HAD BEEN able to secure, for the Likin Deputy Commissioner sent to Hangchow and his Assistant, the foreign house on Pagoda Hill already referred to. Their work was unconditioned and could be done anywhere, and they were thus saved from the deadly conditions of the general foreign settlement that had proved so disastrous to their Customs colleagues.

However, the presence of two highly trained Customs men at the port was a great solace to me, and when a little later on I was again "passed over" in the promotion list I was enabled to obtain short leave to visit Peking to seek a personal interview with the Inspector General. Here a very characteristic thing happened. On our arrival at the Peking terminus, I was met by a note from the I.G.

DEAR KING,

You are transferred to Kowloon. And let me tell you, you won't find it a bed of roses.

ROBERT HART.

One motive for my visit—to seek a transfer from Hangchow—no longer existed, and as the Kowloon Commissionership with residence in Hong-Kong had hitherto only been given to men of substantive rank, I had reason to hope that my new post would not be

an "acting" appointment. At that time the late Sir Robert Bredon was Deputy Inspector General at Peking. He had always been a good friend to me and received me with all his wonted urbanity and charm of manner. He showed me a telegram from the I.G. to the Canton Viceroy announcing the appointment of "Commissioner King."

Hopes ran high, and the same evening I dined with the Inspector General. He was quite affable, and said he would instruct me after dinner about Kowloon. After dinner we danced, and at twelve o'clock, as per rule, the proceedings came to an end. I said Good-night with the others when he said, almost irritably, "I've no time to talk to you to-night, you must come to the office to-morrow morning." I was quite taken aback, for there was nothing in my demeanour the whole evening that could possibly have suggested a wish to take up any of his time. On the contrary, I had been busy absorbing the Peking atmosphere and much enjoyed myself after the long months of deadly dullness at Hangchow, and had given little thought to anything else. However, I said, "Yes, sir," and thanked him. Just at that moment a wretched Customs junior, who had forgotten his hat, rushed into the now deserted hall. He saw the I.G., got one baleful look and fled incontinently. I hope his promotion was not delayed in consequence, but unconsciously he had transgressed an I.G. rule. Guests had to depart at twelve and Good-night then was *Finis*.

The subsequent interview with him was as characteristic as ever. I was to get my instructions and was all ears accordingly. After a short talk on other matters, he took up his well-worn "Billy-cock" hat and said, "You see, formerly the out-stations of the Kowloon Customs outside Hong-Kong waters were like this," and he passed his hand round the crown of his hat. "Now they will be like this," and he shifted his hand to the outer rim of his hat.

"You will have to select the new stations." He then began to fidget about—the well-known sign that time was up.

As I rose to go he said, "I will give you your instructions later on." I thanked him and left.

A day or two afterwards I called again—also to get instructions. This was a final visit, as I was to proceed to Kowloon (Hong-Kong) without waiting for the expiration of my short leave. He talked about anything and everything except Kowloon, and again after a pause came the "Scheidung-motiv." I said "Good-bye, Sir Robert, I shall do my best." He laid his hand on my shoulder and said, "Yes, I know you will," and that was all the instructions I ever got!

The fact was that the situation as between the Canton Viceroy and the Commissioner of Customs at Kowloon had become acute, and the I.G. was on the horns of a dilemma. It was ever his wont to avoid any appearance of "backing down," but in this instance something had to be done as the Viceroy of Canton had refused to receive the Kowloon Commissioner and a business deadlock was in sight. So the only thing to be done was to give leave of absence to the Commissioner and replace him. It was equally foreign to the I.G.'s nature to take any subordinate entirely into his confidence. There were never any frank talks or consultations as to what should be done, such as obtain in most Civil Service Departments between Chief and Staff.

Nobody was ever asked for an opinion and none volunteered advice, or if anyone were rash enough to do so, the result seldom encouraged a repetition of the adventure. As far as I was concerned, I knew enough not to ask any questions, not even to venture a hint as to what my service status was to be in the new appointment. I wanted to go to Kowloon—in fact it was a post I knew would be full of new interest to me—so I was careful to say nothing to jeopardize my chances.

While at Hangchow it fell to my lot to entertain Royalty. It came about this way. Prince Heinrich of Prussia and the Princess were in China, and had, doubtless, been told of the beauties of the far-famed Hsi-hu, and the City of Marco Polo, and determined to see it all for themselves. There was no German representative at Hangchow and the German Consul-General at Shanghai, with whom I was well acquainted, had written to ask me to do what I could to show the distinguished visitors round. I telegraphed immediately to Peking and got a wire in quick response to do all in my power. I had read much and heard more from German friends of the Hohenzollerns, but had never seen one in the flesh, so here was an opportunity to my taste, and I wired the Consul-General that by order of the Inspector General everything would be done to make the visit a pleasant one to the Prince and Princess. But alas! when the morning of *der Tag* of their arrival came there was no Royal cortège anywhere visible. We waited and waited at the jetty and at last a steam launch towing the house-boats containing the Royal party arrived.

There had been a "breakdown" *en route* and it was midday before they arrived. But all was in readiness, and the bungalow on the hills ready for the reception of the Prince and party. He was attended by the Consul-General, and the Princess by the Consul-General's wife. There was also a doctor, several *aides* and one *Kammer-frau* in the party. The Hill Bungalow, overlooking the lake and city, was fully six miles away and I had four-bearer chairs in attendance for the Prince and Princess, and ponies and chairs were ready for the rest of the party.

After the usual introductions, I escorted the Princess to her chair and turned to do the same for the Prince. But he was already mounted on the scraggiest pony of the whole lot, and shouted, "Do you think I'm going to ride in a chair?" I said, "All right, Sir, but please take a better pony." This

he did and the whole cavalcade set off, the Prince leading as prescribed by German etiquette. He, of course, had only a general idea of the route and I told the *Kammer-herr* that he should be warned. He was inclined to ride rather recklessly, and did not know that in a Chinese street one must ride in the middle and not swerve to either side, else one may get a stunning blow on the head from the overhanging shop signs.

The *Kammer-herr* said, "We can't speak to him, but you can. He will take it from you." So I rode up behind him, touched my hat and said, "Will you take a pilot, Sir," in best nautical style. He laughed at the joke and let me ride in front.

As we neared our destination, I asked the Prince if he would approve of a little surprise I had arranged for the Princess. I wanted to take him up the back way over the hill-side, while the Princess was carried in her chair up the steps to the front entrance to the bungalow. We should arrive there first. I was to vanish and he was to stand in the doorway and bid her welcome.

It all came off splendidly and the Princess was delighted. The Prince led her into the house, *her* house for the time being. I had vanished, "according to plan," but the rest of the party had now arrived and we all had tea, the Princess presiding. It was her party and she poured out the tea herself. The magic of the lights and shadows was now commencing. She and the Prince stood on the verandah and drank in the scene together. "This is the China we have read of but never seen till now," exclaimed the Prince, and they both agreed that in no place in the world had they seen anything to rival its beauty.

The afternoon passed pleasantly enough. The Princess skipped over the rocks and saw the view from every point of vantage. The original idea was that they were to stay one night or even a few days at the bungalow and all was in readiness for them;

but a telegram from Shanghai had followed us up the hill and its contents necessitated an immediate return to attend some function arranged there for them. The Prince was obviously "peevish" and so was the Princess. They would gladly have had a "let-off" from the attentions of their fellow subjects in Shanghai, but *noblesse oblige*—and as we wanted to go back through Hangchow City to see the shops and temples, we were soon *en route* again.

In one of the largest temples a function was on, and there were crowds of worshippers and a good deal of Buddhistic ritual in evidence. The Prince made a remark that revealed an inner thought. Referring to the worshippers he said, "As long as they are like this we shall always beat them."

He plainly did not share his Imperial brother's view of the Yellow Peril. The Princess bought lots of dolls and toys for her children and we got back all safe and sound before darkness quite closed in. A few days later I received a letter from the Consul-General, to say how much the Prince and Princess had enjoyed their visit, and expressing their thanks for and appreciation of all that had been done for them. I had asked the Princess to look upon the whole thing as a picnic, as we had no means at our disposal for a more formal reception. She caught eagerly at the idea and made it very easy for us to do the rest. In order that she might have a permanent record of the beauties of Hangchow, I begged her permission to present a rather remarkable set of photographs made for us by a very artistic friend some time previously, and she accepted most graciously.

I was specially interested in observing the side-lights on the Prince's temperament. I had heard of the red flash in the Hohenzollern eye and watched for it. It came out once or twice during the day but was instantly repressed, and the good-humoured "sailor-man" expression resumed. He spoke faultless English, and his general make-up was that of a

British Naval officer. He sat his horse like a sailor and was generally free in speech and manner.

For instance, on the way home, as we rode side by side and there were no listeners, he was very outspoken about Kiaochow, and one could see that the whole undertaking was not much to his liking. He foresaw that Germany's action would not stand alone and that other nations would follow suit. The English, the French, possibly even the Italians. Would each nation raise and train a native army for defence and perhaps further aggression? If so, what would be the result? Partition of China into foreign spheres. Each sphere suspicious of, if not hostile to, each other. A state of things that could never lead to the expansion of the trade of anybody concerned, Foreign or Chinese. He seemed to have thought a great deal about it and to be doubtful as to the wisdom of it all. Altogether a remarkable man, quite free from the egotistical conceit attributed to Kaiser Wilhelm II.

I have already referred to the large number of missionaries resident in the city of Hangchow. Amongst the more interesting of them was the late Dr. Moule, Bishop of Mid-China. He came of a scholarly family, being brother to Handley Moule, the late Bishop of Durham. They were Wessex people and knew Thomas Hardy when he was a village lad. Dr. Moule was a great admirer of Hardy, but deplored some of his later work. One New Year's Day I had a delightful walk with the Bishop to the top of the Pei-Kao-shan, one of the highest peaks in the district. Though upwards of seventy years of age he climbed the by no means easy path in a manner that reminded me of Kipling's description of the old hill-man priest in *Kim*. All the way along he discoursed of the foreign trees brought from India by pious hands long years ago and which are still to be seen all round, especially in Ling Yin, the great Buddhistic establishment to which thousands of pilgrims came each year.

Dr. Moule had married us in 1881, and we were

sorry to have seen so little of him and others in the city. But the distance between it and the settlement and the early closing of the gates forbade much intimacy. In fact, after dark, we were left very much to our own resources, and visitors were few and far between. We had a few pets. A black kitten, an old dog who came in one night from nowhere and insisted upon staying. Last but not least, "Weetie Monk," a charming little gibbon, who always behaved like a perfect gentleman until the bananas appeared on the table. Then he threw off all restraint and would load himself up with an impossible number and retire to a dark corner to enjoy them. On such occasions it was quite dangerous to go near him. He was a very loyal little beast and much attached to my wife, who had nursed him through several illnesses. As if to repay her he would sit with her for hours during her long days of convalescence after malaria, and be highly indignant and jealous if other people came along.

Alas ! both he and the kitten did not long survive. He was a native of the island of Hainan and the cold weather of Hangchow was more than he could stand. It was pathetic to hear him cough, and he only seemed comfortable when leaning his poor little back against the kitchen stove. He was a universal favourite, and was attended by two foreign doctors until his lamented death. His skeleton—on a beautiful purple plush cushion—is now a well-known exhibit in the Shanghai Museum, where for a long time he was the only specimen of his kind. The poor little "Kit" was drowned after having been chased about by some disaffected policeman. We were on leave at the time. The foreigner in charge of the police, and incidentally of the kitten, was not on good terms with his men, and no doubt their action was an attempt to get him into trouble with the Commissioner.

Our journey back to Hangchow was uneventful. On arrival at Hong-Kong I found the Commissioner

had gone on long leave and the Deputy Commissioner in charge. He was all agog for information, as he too had not been instructed from Peking. To his inquiry I returned a cheerful answer that it was all right. I proceeded to take over charge of the district.

We had to get to work at once, as the British authorities were pressing for the evacuation of the old Customs stations round Hong-Kong, as they were included in the extension of Kowloon territory and had now become part of the colony. I got into immediate touch with my Lappa (Macao) colleague, the late Monsieur T. Piry—a very able Frenchman, whose conspicuous abilities were shown later on in a still wider field as Director-General of the Chinese Postal Service. Together we proceeded to Canton to interview the Viceroy and obtain his support and sanction in the task immediately before us.

The situation we had to deal with arose from the Convention of the 9th June, 1898, whereby China leased to Great Britain for a term of ninety-nine years nearly 300 square miles of continent, islands, and surrounding seas.

This new territory contained the three island taxing stations of the Chinese Government, viz. Capsumoon on the west, the main entrance from Hong-Kong to the Canton River; Changchow on the south, checking trade to Macao, and Fotowchow on the east. There were also certain land frontier stations, of which Kowloon city was the chief. To understand the *raison d'être* and value to China of these stations the geographical position of the island of Hong-Kong must be taken into account. It is somewhat as if the Isle of Wight were in possession of a Power other than British and that Power insisted on making the island a depot for the *free* import of goods destined for use in England, and, presupposing protection in England for the sake of argument, would be liable to duty there on entry. British and other traders import into Hong-Kong annually millions'

worth of goods *free of duty*, the great bulk of which is destined for consumption in China. England believes in, or at any rate practises, free trade, but China cannot meet her obligations abroad without the aid of revenue raised from maritime and inland Customs.

The position thus created for China by England's free-trade proclivities, and the weakness of China's officials at the various points of inlet into China from Hong-Kong waters, led to the establishment by China of Customs stations around Hong-Kong and placed under the control of the Inspector General of Customs in Peking. Their functions were to tax the junk trade into China and from China at the nearest points to its exit from or entry into British waters. The process of collection has always been very tedious and expensive for China, necessitating the employment of a large staff ashore and afloat, the cost and maintenance of steam revenue cruisers, launches, etc., etc. But the imperative need China has for money left her practically no choice in the matter, and the revenue collected in 1898 amounted to Hk.Tls. 854,205. It was this revenue that was being jeopardized by the demand of the Colonial Government for the removal of all Chinese Customs stations from the new territory and its waters. It is no doubt a fact that a Chinese Customs collectorate cannot legally function on British territory, but it is equally a fact that by mutual agreement between the two countries the position could have been regularized very much to the benefit, direct and indirect, of the colony, as follows :—

1. If Hong-Kong admitted a Chinese Customs control, steam launches and their tows from Hong-Kong could trade freely under Inland Steam Navigation rules with many non-Treaty ports in its vicinity.

2. Junkmasters could have their cargoes examined on shipment and discharge in the colony instead of having to repair to Chinese Customs stations outside colonial waters, losing much time by detention *en route*.

3. The duties would all be paid in Hong-Kong and much interest would be saved.

To these advantages might be added others affecting the trade in *foreign* bottoms between Hong-Kong and China. The settlement of the whole matter of the so-called blockade of Hong-Kong, which has exercised the mind of the colony for so many years past, lies not in banishing the Chinese Customs stations out of sight, but in an agreement between the two Governments by which their existence might be made unnecessary.

A small joint commission of experts could soon reduce to writing the necessary mutual concessions in order to attain this end, and assimilate the procedure, which the Germans and Japanese found to work to their advantage in Kiaochow, to the needs of Hong-Kong.

The British Government has undertaken to control the opium trade in the colony. Why not adapt the procedure, which was created for that purpose, to function in *all* branches of the trade, and thus remove for ever all causes for fiscal disputes in Hong-Kong waters ?

But as no agreement was in sight, although expressly asked for by China, we had to do as best we could to change the stations from the crown rim of the I.G.'s "Billy-cock" to its outer edge ! The Viceroy of Canton had proposed eleven rules as the basis of administrative (Customs) work within the new territory, to one of which he adhered most tenaciously.

"As England has consented to render effective assistance in matters connected with the Customs Revenue, the existing Customs stations shall continue to be under the control of the Commissioners of the Customs."

This was the vital matter for the Viceroy. He had no objection to the British getting as much territory as they wanted for the purpose of making the Colony

safe from foreign attack, but he knew that displacement of the taxing stations, or any limitation of the right of search, must inevitably mean a loss of revenue to China.

The Viceroy's views were duly communicated to the British Minister in Peking by the Tsungli Yamen on the 10th September, 1898. On the 20th of the same month the British Minister replied somewhat curtly, when we consider how much more could have been done to soften the blow to the Chinese, "that on the 9th June last an agreement for the extension of the territory of the Colony of Hong-Kong was entered into by the Governments of Great Britain and China in which all relevant matters were included in clear detail. It is therefore out of the question that the Governor-General of Canton should be permitted to draw up regulations. His action is quite uncalled for and his Regulations are unworthy of consideration."

Whether the Viceroy's proposed Regulations were really unworthy of consideration does not very much affect the general question (of agreement), but, in judging his action, it must not be forgotten that his proposed regulations were the outcome of the invitation of the British Consul at Canton to despatch an officer to discuss the matter.

What is more important is the British Minister's remark that all relevant matters were included (in the Convention) *in clear detail*. As a matter of fact—as anyone may see for himself who takes the trouble to read the document—the Convention was vague in the extreme in just the matters where it should have been precise. No mention at all is made in it of the Customs Taxing stations as such, but it is, nevertheless, certain that the Tsungli Yamen relied on the clause relating to the retention of Chinese jurisdiction at Kowloon (one of the stations) as conclusive that there was no intention of interfering with any of the existing stations. It was therefore a somewhat rough awakening for

the Viceroy when he was suddenly presented with a demand from the Hong-Kong Government to haul down the Chinese flag and vacate the stations at a fortnight's notice.

The Viceroy at once protested and asked the Governor of Hong-Kong why the Convention was not carried out, and stated that he looked upon the forcible occupation of Kowloon by British troops as a breach of the agreement between the two nations. The Governor in reply is understood to have said that, as the British flag had been hoisted in the new territory, it followed as a matter of course (and of law) that all Chinese jurisdiction therein must come to an end. At this point negotiations were opened up direct between Peking and London, resulting in a concession allowing the Chinese Customs stations to function for another six months, i.e. until 1st October, 1899. So no time was to be lost, but we at least knew exactly where we were. Piry and I duly interviewed the Viceroy early in June. H. E. T'an, Kung-pao, Viceroy of the twin provinces of Kwangtung and Kwangsi and ruling over upwards of 35,000,000 people, was a very distinguished official of long service. But he had little acquaintance with foreign affairs, and was, moreover, very easily put out when he could not get his own way. He had, no doubt, taken an entirely wrong view of my predecessor at Kowloon, accusing him of subserviency to the Governor of Hong-Kong, and lack of loyalty to the Chinese Government. Neither accusation was in the most remote degree founded on fact, but the old gentleman was thoroughly "peevish" with the situation and was not averse to finding a scapegoat on whom to put the loss of face with which he was threatened. Piry and I had carefully mapped out the line we intended to take.

While defending our late colleague's reputation if attacked, as it was sure to be, by the irate Viceroy, we resolved to sooth his susceptibilities in every possible

way. But we had made up our minds that we had to get him round by hook or by crook. The meeting at first was not encouraging. We were ushered in, and in a few minutes H. E. T'an appeared. He sat down at the end of the long table and for a while remained with his face averted from us. Piry sat next him and talked slowly and respectfully into his nearest ear, without, however, inducing him to turn round. All the time he was ejaculating rather disjointed remarks not at all complimentary to my predecessor, who, he chose to think, had incited the Governor of Hong-Kong to send British troops to invade Chinese soil. The situation became quite painful. I had hitherto not looked about me much, as I, too, was supporting Piry in his ministrations to the Viceroy's left ear. The old man wore a large white cap, something like a bandage over his head, as he was suffering from a bad cold, and we could see very little of his face, but what we did see appeared like that of a very angry fowl, very red and "cock's comby."

I looked round the table and, sitting amongst the secretaries, saw to my joy the familiar face of Kung Hsin-chan, nephew of the Minister to London of that name of whom I had very pleasant recollections in his student days in England. Our eyes met, and soon afterwards he rose from his seat and whispered something in the Viceroy's ear—the ear opposite the one we had been assailing. The old man turned round suddenly and said to me, "You are the new Kowloon Commissioner." I respectfully replied that I was. The next question was somewhat disconcerting: "I suppose you have been to see the Governor of Hong-Kong before coming here." I assured H. E. that I considered my first duty was to pay my respects to him, the Viceroy. He was visibly mollified and, what was more important, the ice was broken. Piry hastened to take advantage.

The Viceroy had really been "listening in" all the

time, and said to us, "Oh, you want permission to open up *new* stations round Hong-Kong."

This was the bridge we had prepared for him. Not a word about abolishing or being turned out of the existing stations—only permission to open new ones for the convenience of traders, etc. He, of course, saw through it all, but also saw that a way of retreat was open without any loss of face, and he promptly made things easy. He suddenly became quite keen about the new stations. Should he appoint a deputy to assist us in their selection, etc. We thanked him and said a despatch from him to be carried by us personally would be sufficient introduction to the magistrates at the places we intended to visit.

He referred several times to my predecessor, but we assured him, and he seemed now inclined to forgive and forget the past, that China had no more faithful and loyal servant than my predecessor at Kowloon, and in the end all was peace.

As we were taking leave of him the Viceroy asked me how long I had been in China. I said "I had eaten Chinese rice for twenty-four years." The answer pleased him; but something came across his mind and he said, "Why are you only an Acting Commissioner?" I replied demurely that I did not know and did not dare to ask the Inspector General the reason! He laughed, for the autocratic dealings of the I.G. with his staff were well known throughout Chinese officialdom; but he added kindly that I should soon get promotion, so all ended well, thanks to Piry's masterly handling of a very difficult situation and Kung's opportune whisper in the Viceroy's ear. I still enjoy Kung's friendship, but he has never yet told me what he really said!

Piry and I at once set to work on selecting sites for the new stations. Our headquarters were on board a revenue cruiser, and we visited all the likeliest spots at the nearest points to Hong-Kong territory

and waters. We tramped about in heat and rain, and the new stations were soon in process of being. We were also not idle in Hong-Kong, and it was noticeable that the larger shipping firms were beginning to see that the so-called blockade of Hong-Kong could be got rid of by other means than the somewhat summary interpretation of the Convention adopted by the Colonial authorities. But for the nonce the time was not ripe, and there was nothing for it but to evacuate the old stations and occupy the new ones. It was a sorrowful task in one way, because at the old stations the foreign and native staff were all comfortably housed in well-built and sanitary quarters, whereas at the new ones all such matters had to be commenced *de novo*. It did not help matters that our plight was publicly known, and mat-shed erectors put up their prices accordingly. Luckily the Hong-Kong mat-shed on bamboo "crutches" with heavily thatched roof is the best of its kind, otherwise the staff would have suffered more than it did. The thought, ever present in my mind, how utterly unnecessary and even futile the whole action was that compelled the change, did not tend to make the job any easier.

It was on the return from one of our exploratory expeditions that the Deputy Commissioner met me on board and told me of my wife's sudden and serious illness. We had only been absent from Hong-Kong a few days, and when I left she was in much improved health after our terrible experiences at Hangchow. But malaria is a subtle foe and lurks in the blood even when saturating doses of quinine have been supposed to conquer it. A family "event" too was not far off, and when high fever set in the case rapidly became serious. On the urgent advice of our good friend Dr. William Hartigan, there was only one chance for her life, and that was to get to sea at once. I wired to Peking for short leave and we left Hong-Kong soon afterwards. The high temperature disappeared at sea as by magic. I arrived at Hong-Kong

IN THE CHINESE CUSTOMS SERVICE

on the 3rd June and left on 8th July, 1899, but the few weeks in office had been fruitful, and I left to my successor a clear field for future operations. The new stations were all mapped out and the Viceroy reconciled.

The Governor of Hong-Kong, the late Sir Henry Blake, had always shown himself most sympathetic to the Customs throughout and eased the situation for us whenever he could do so. The Colony had got its way, and, incidentally, had also obtained a clearer knowledge of the true inwardness of the case, so much so that the local newspapers were no longer quite so sure as formerly that the Customs—the wicked Customs—were at the bottom of all their troubles.

CHAPTER XI

In London on short leave, 1899-1900—Transferred to Canton as Commissioner on reduced pay, and why.

ONCE MORE IN LONDON my wife and I lived quietly in various lodgings until the birth of our seventh child.

The doctors were apprehensive for my wife's safety until the event had passed off without "malarial" complications.

We followed Dr. Cantlie's advice that the best place for a fever patient was in a second-floor bedroom amidst the bricks and mortar of a large city, and were actually so located in Oxford and Cambridge Terrace when the child was born on the 1st October, 1899. The four months' leave granted to me in July of the same year expired in November, but in view of the exigencies of the case I had already applied for and been granted three months' extension.

In the matter of pay and status I had been treated as an Acting Commissioner on short leave for the first four months, but was now put back and granted extension of pay as a Deputy Commissioner only. It was therefore with heavy hearts and very empty pockets that we again took up life's journeyings and made our way back to Hong-Kong. My orders on leaving were to resume duty on return at Hong-Kong, and I duly reported my arrival and inquired—owing to the longer time I had been absent—whether there were any *further* orders. The reply was "appointed Commissioner, Canton," a billet generally given to Senior Commissioners, who, as a rule, always moved Heaven and Earth to get out of it. It was not so in

this case—my predecessor, a very senior and leading German, being wanted for Shanghai. Canton was then considered to be the second port in the Empire in Customs importance. Besides being the seat of the Viceregal Government, the Viceroy and his co-equal the Tartar General, it was also the headquarters of the “Hoppo” or Superintendent of Customs—a very high official—generally an Imperial clansman and always a *direct* appointee of Peking, by and through whom all the maritime Customs dues and duties were collected throughout the vast area of the two Kwangs (Kwangtung and Kwangsi).

It was thus a very important place from all points of view, political and fiscal, and was, moreover, ruled over at that time by no less a person than the great Li Hung-chang.

I was therefore very glad to get substantive rank at last in so senior a port, although I knew, of course, that life there would be very expensive. Still, I hoped that I should be able to get on all right on the pay I had been drawing in Kowloon as an Acting Commissioner, viz. Taels 800 per month—the usual rate for newly appointed Commissioners. But I had reckoned without my host, and on arrival in the City of Rams found myself a full-blown Commissioner on Taels 100 a month less than I had been receiving as “Acting Commissioner.” No explanation was vouchsafed from Peking, but it was understood that I, and one or two others, were the first victims of a reduction of the “doubled pay” granted to the Customs Service by the generosity of the Chinese Government in 1898. I knew better than to attempt any protest, and a few months later the I.G. resumed the old rate of Taels 800 for newly appointed Commissioners—although on the principle that he was never in the wrong, he neglected to adjust the pay of the persons selected for experiment. The words of the Psalmist often recurred to me: “He putteth down one and setteth up another.” Anyhow, the

dregs of the I.G.'s cup were a pretty stiff proposition for those who had to drink them, and quite prevented anybody from lifting up his horn on high or speaking with a stiff neck.

With regard to his well-known dislike of publicity, it will be remembered that to publicity the Customs Service was indebted for the "double pay" granted in 1898. For years we had been on starvation pay owing to the fall in silver, and the Inspector General had often been approached in the matter. But while deploring the situation from the comfortable point of view of one whose own salary—reported to be £8,000 per annum—was no doubt sufficient for his modest wants, the I.G. had invariably "made excuse" and refrained from applying to the Chinese Government for such increase of the Customs allowance as would enable him to ease it. "To ease the situation" was a favourite phrase of his in this connection, always coupled with his regrets that he was unable to do anything in the matter. To give the thing a scientific turn, he would remark that as the Revenue was collected in silver, it followed that the Customs pay must be in silver also. Quite logical, no doubt, and admitted by all, but also quite beside the point, which was that the silver issued was insufficient and should be increased.

To the editor of the *North China Daily News* belongs the merit of bringing matters to a crisis. In a very temperate, but firmly worded, leading article he let daylight into the whole affair. Things here were, indeed, at a pretty pass, especially in the Outdoor Staff, whose pay—always inadequate—was utterly insufficient to provide the decencies and necessities of life for them and their families. It is pleasant to record that as soon as the Inspector General presented his Memorial, the increased allowance asked for was at once granted by the Chinese Government.

CHAPTER XII

Appointed Commissioner of Customs, Canton, April 1900—Li Hung-chang and the Boxer crisis—He appoints me Superintending Commissioner of the "Two Kwang" Custom Houses—I accompany him to Shanghai—His reception there and serene composure—"Your Inspector General is alive"—I resume duty at Canton.

MY APPOINTMENT as Commissioner of Customs at Canton was dated 1st April, 1900, not an inappropriate day for the "switchback" promotion involved. However, it was no use saying anything, and a very few weeks after taking over charge I had my hands too full of other matters to have leisure even to think about it.

Portents were in the air, and though they were ignored in Peking, the activities of the "Boxers" in Shantung were causing anxiety to the great Satraps, Li Hung-chang in the South and Liu Kung-yi in Central China. Those who knew the Empress Dowager best were uncertain as to her attitude. In 1895 she had consented to Li vacating the Viceroy's Yamen at Tientsin, and though he was still a power in the land in one capacity or another right up to the time when he was transferred to Canton in 1899, his absence from the Chihli Viceroyalty meant that one of her most skilled and trusted advisers was no longer at her side. Looking back at it now, nearly all authorities agree that had Li been Viceroy in Chihli the Boxer movement would have been squashed flat in Shantung, and there would have been no Peking siege. Li himself took this view both before and after the events of that unparalleled episode in diplomatic history.

My first interview with him as Canton Com-

missioner was on the 6th April, 1900, but of course I knew all about him long before, and he was kind enough to say he remembered me in 1887-89, when I was Senior Assistant in the Tientsin Customs under Gustav Detring. That was in the days when the fate of China's dependency, Korea, was hanging in the balance, and I was given the job (by Detring) to write a memorandum on the subject. I remember it was entitled "The argument about Korea," and, in its Chinese dress, commended itself to the great Satrap, who, in his turn, commended me! Detring often said to me: "I must take you some day to see the Viceroy," but somehow or other it never came off as a personal visit, though naturally I saw him on several public occasions. A retentive memory was one of Li's leading characteristics, and it made things easier for me to find I still had a place therein. At our first interview I was impressed by his wonderful personality. I had been warned from Peking that he might be difficult to get on with, but I can honestly say that in all my close intercourse with him before and during the actual period of the Peking siege I received nothing except kindness at his hands. Piracy was rife at the time in the Canton Delta, but Li was determined that it should cease. The crux of the whole matter lay in the facility with which potential wrongdoers could obtain arms both in Hong-Kong and Macao, and the conversation turned chiefly on how to induce the British and Portuguese authorities to restrict the trade. My colleague—the outgoing Commissioner of German nationality—said, rather bluntly, as I thought, that in his view one way would be for the Chinese Government to refrain from buying arms in either colony, and notifying both Governments accordingly. Then there would be no excuse for them not to deal severely in the matter. Li complimented the speaker on not being afraid to displease people in the execution of duty, and asked me what I thought, which gave me an opportunity of saying

that I should always do my best to carry out any duties he might entrust to me. Li gave a swift glance at each of us. He knew of course that we knew that the Canton Government was one of Hong-Kong's best customers. As a fencer I could not but admire the adroit deflection that left the general question in a state about which each of us might draw his own conclusion.

April was a busy month for me, but by the end of it I felt at home with all the Chinese hierarchy. Tartar General, Futai, Fantai, and all heads of departments were showing me the greatest good-will, and we all worked happily together under the Li ægis and prestige. Signs of unrest even in Canton were not wanting. On the 25th April a leading local official was shot at and wounded on the Macao Steamboat Wharf. Two days later the Head Police Official came to see me and said the Viceroy, as was his wont in such cases, had set a time limit for the arrest of the would-be assassin. Still more significant was the Viceroy's decision early in May to give power to the Commissioner of Customs to search all native vessels for arms. Li was ever on the alert, and always a long way ahead of his fellow-countrymen in scenting danger to China, the Manchu Dynasty and his own interests.

On the 1st June the Dragon Festival was observed with its wonted wealth of display afloat, but precautions were taken by the local officials lest popular enthusiasm should be deflected into undesirable channels. However, all passed off well. I was visiting the Pan-yü-hsien (local Canton magistrate) on the 5th, and things seemed quite normal. My newly appointed Macao colleague visited the Viceroy, the Governor and the Customs Superintendent (Hoppo) on the 8th, and got no inkling of any impending *dénouement* in the situation in the North. The Inspector General's telegram to me from Peking on the 10th June was therefore somewhat in the nature

of a bombshell. In it I was instructed to visit the Viceroy at once, and say that the situation here (Peking) was extremely dangerous. "All Legations apprehend attack and Chinese Government considered helpless if not hostile. If anything happens, or if situation does not quickly improve, united foreign intervention on a large scale certain and end of Empire possible. Beg him from me (i.e. Robert Hart) wire Empress Dowager to make Legation safely paramount and disregard all counsellors who advise hostile action. Urgent." This telegram bore date Peking, 10th June, 11.10 a.m., and reached me at 1.30 p.m. After deciphering it with great difficulty, owing to the many errors in the text, I started at once for the Viceroy's Yamen, a chair ride of over an hour. In my case no formalities were required to gain admission, and I was soon at work with my old friend Kung putting the I.G. message into Chinese. The Viceroy had a whole lot of visitors, but we sandwiched ourselves in between the departure of the Admiral and the next arrival, and laid the message before Li, who with his usual coolness and insight, grasped the situation at once, and said he would wire immediately to the Empress Dowager in the way the I.G. asked for. At the same time I sent away a message to the I.G. over the Viceroy's private wire telling him his appeal to Li had been delivered and the Empress Dowager communicated with. I stayed in the Yamen while the messages were despatched, and did not get home until dinner-time. The Viceroy's manner was grave and gracious, and he laid it upon me to keep him well informed, and to come and see him without ceremony or previous notification whenever I deemed it necessary. The next day, 11th June, the Viceroy came to the foreign settlement at Canton (Shamien) and visited the American Consul General on board a U.S.A. gunboat then in port. He also landed on Shamien and called on the German Consul. The American warship fired a salute of nineteen guns, soldiers

lined the Bund, and the Customs Guard paraded. He was reassuring in his speech to the two Consuls about the troubles up North, and I fancy was actually feeling easier in his mind about them. I saw him again the next day, 12th June, with my Kowloon (Hong-Kong) colleague, who had to listen to a good deal of the old man's badinage about the Hong-Kong opium farmer and the alleged smuggling of opium into China on a large scale from Hong-Kong. This was all for the benefit of the Kowloon Commissioner, but he soon got off the subject with a pat on the shoulder to me and a sly remark that what he had said was all "K'ung hua"—empty talk. I immediately replied that we did not mistake his real meaning, which was to admonish us to be careful. He beamed at that, and said to my Kowloon colleague, "Go on with your seizures on the frontier and inland," and that the local officials were to render all assistance.

He then talked about the Boxers up North and Kang Yü-wei, and said he expected to be summoned back to put them down. In which event he would be anxious about Canton, and said he must be on the look-out for the landing of rebels from Singapore, where Kang Yü-wei was busy plotting against the Empress Dowager.

In taking leave I told him how pleased the foreign ladies had been with his attentions to them on his visit to Shamien the day before. He had seen the U.S. Consul's wife and several other ladies, and had been most courteous and affable. We went on to the Hoppo, and I see a note in my diary "Got home at 7 p.m." The next day I tried to ascertain more news. The man at the telegraph office, a good friend of mine, said messages during the last two days were being sent northwards *via* Hong-Kong and the Cable Companies, and added the North of China is in great confusion; but I felt pretty sure that the Viceroy's message to the Empress Dowager and my

corollary to it for the I.G. had "got through" before the interruption of the Peking-Tientsin land-lines. On the 18th rumours were rife in Hong-Kong that the Legations were attacked, the German Minister killed and that the foreign ships were bombarding the Taku forts. The same day came a message from the Viceroy that he would go North soon. On the 19th Dr. Mark (the Viceroy's Haus Arzt) came from the Yamen to tell me that the Viceroy intended to go by steamer to Shanghai and later to Chinwangtao, and thence to Peking overland. He asked me what I thought of the scheme. I suggested that possibly a better plan would be for him to go to Taku and judge of the position of affairs on the spot. I added: "He can only go North to restore and maintain order in co-operation with the foreign forces now engaged with the Boxers." That I thought was the best chance of securing the integrity of the Chinese Empire. Dr. George Mark had always a difficult part to play. The Viceroy's health, on which so much depended, was by no means satisfactory, and gave us all great cause for anxiety. I always backed up Mark whenever a chance of doing so occurred, but the Viceroy had no real belief in foreign medicine. Mark, a Cantonese, was foreign-trained and knew his job. One day he ventured to remonstrate on the subject of preserved (?) eggs, to which the Viceroy was particularly addicted. Li waxed very wroth. "Wo-ti tu-tze, shih wo-ti-tu-tzu." (My "tummy" is my "tummy.") "Wo hsiao-te wo-ti tu-tzu. Ni pu hsiao-te wo-ti tu-tzu." (I know my "tummy." You do not know it.) And ended by referring to the unhappy Leib Artz as a Yang Kuei-tzu, i.e. foreign devil. Here some members of the staff protested, but old Li squashed them all with the devastating remark, "Shuo Kuei-hua, tou shih Kuei-tzu." (All are devils who speak the devil's language!) Having delivered himself thus he got quite friendly again, and almost promised to give up the ancient eggs.

This was very typical of his attitude towards foreign things generally. He knew their value, none better, but he did not love them, and occasionally—but not often—when the mask galled, winged words escaped.

Li's impending departure from Canton soon got abroad, and he was the recipient of many urgings not to leave the province. The three men who really mattered in China at that time were the Canton, Nanking, and Wuchang Viceroys, and of these Li was by far the most influential. This was amply testified by the fact that in her hour of need the Empress Dowager sent for Li and not for either of the others, and that the Nanking Viceroy was the first to acknowledge Li's right to leadership on his arrival in Shanghai. Li had made up his mind to go, but consented to put off the date of his departure with the double view of not appearing to flout the protests of foreigners and natives alike while gaining time to see how the situation would develop. About this time (22nd June) London was getting uneasy, and my old Chief in the London Office wired for reliable news of Li's movements—an attention which gratified him not a little. He knew of course of the intimate relations between Robert Hart and his trusted henchman in London. The next day (23rd June) was full of anxiety. All sorts of rumours were flying round about the bombardment of Tientsin by Chinese regulars. Li had also heard of this, but would not believe that General Nieh—in command there—could have had anything to do with it. Kung wrote to me the same evening and said the Viceroy was very anxious to know what reply I had from the Chefoo Commissioner *re* the Inspector General. Next day (Sunday, 24th June) I wired again to Chefoo, and on the 25th got a reply stating that communication with Peking had ceased on the 15th June, and that the mails could not be sent from Taku to Tientsin. On hearing this the Viceroy said he had no later news and feared from rumours (yao yen) that matters were

"THEY DID BURN THE SUMMER PALACE"

getting worse. Later on the same evening I received another telegram from the Chefoo Commissioner, rehearsing the situation. "Taku forts taken by the allied foreign force. Tientsin foreign settlement destroyed by Chinese troops. Relieving force repulsed 23rd June. No news of Admiral Seymour. No news of Tientsin residents, but garrison holding out." It took me till midnight to decipher the telegram, but we got it before the Viceroy in the early morning of the 26th. Kung replied that the Viceroy had similar news, and feared some of the Chinese troops must have joined the Boxers. The Viceroy, he said, could not understand the cause of so much fighting. I replied mentioning the analogy of the Indian Mutiny, and expressed the hope that China would come through these troubles just as England did. I visited the Viceroy at 3 p.m. He showed me recent telegrams from Yüan Shih-K'ai at Chi-nan-foo. As we were talking a further message came in announcing opposition round Tientsin overcome and Allies going to Peking. Li asked me to tell the British Consul-General of this. A long talk about the situation ensued. The Viceroy held the view that the defence of the Taku forts was inevitable, if no arrangement for the passage of armed troops had been made. It was now getting late, but we still sat on, as the Viceroy made no sign for us to go. The conversation touched upon a possible slaughtering of foreign women and children in Tientsin or Peking. The Viceroy turned to me and said, "Such an idea fills me with sorrow. Have I not known a great many of them!" He asked me: "In such a case would the Allies burn Peking?" I made no direct reply, but merely said, "What would have happened had the Chinese Government executed Harry Parkes and Mr. Loch in 1860?" He nodded and said: "Yes, and they *did* burn the Summer Palace." He was visibly tired out and very worried, but not altogether without hope. On his leaving us I impressed on Kung and Mark that one thought alone must be

kept for ever before their minds and therefore before his mind as well: That the one *unforgivable* thing would be the killing of non-combatant foreigners or of women and children, and I rehearsed to them the I.G.'s warning in his telegram of the 10th June. It was too late to go home through the streets, so I went out by the water gate in a sampan in charge of one of Li's "tigers," i.e. Anhui body-guards—lying at full length to avoid undesirable attention. I had time to reflect on the different points of view about killing prisoners of ancients and moderns in China and in foreign countries. But, whatever his views, the Viceroy knew well that China's fate and independence were in the balance, and his only hope was that no massacre had taken place. He was unwearied in his endeavours to get his views before the Empress Dowager, and to this end was in constant telegraphic communication with Yüan Shih-K'ai at Chi-nan-foo. Yüan used to send all messages for Peking by courier. Each message was entrusted to ten different men—in the hope that, even if nine were stopped and killed by the Boxers, one might haply get through. Some doubtless did so, and I have always believed that the lulls in the attacks on the Legation noted by Sir Robert Hart in *These from the Land of Sinim* (pp. 33 and 34) were directly due to Li's efforts.

But to return to affairs in Canton. On the 28th June news of unrest in Wuchow on the West River reached me. I passed this on to the Viceroy at once, and he took immediate steps to strengthen the hands of the local officials all along the river districts. Later in the evening Kung told me the Viceroy had received orders to stay at Canton and await further instructions. There was always some doubt as to the origin or even existence of these orders, and it may well be that the Viceroy—who had made up his mind to act on his own initiative whenever he considered the time was ripe—merely announced as "orders" resolves which really emanated from himself. A rather clever

way of dealing with a very difficult situation. There were other ways also. An inconvenient Edict could always be regarded as spurious and disregarded accordingly. Li—a past master in Oriental diplomacy—was seldom at a loss for a pretext.

On 1st July I received a telegram from the Chefoo Commissioner asking whether the Viceroy had left Canton, and stating that the foreign Ministers were still in Peking. I took it at once to the Viceroy. He asked me if I thought it was good news. I said: "Considering what we know of matters *outside* Peking, I think it better the Ministers should be inside rather than outside the city." Kung was very apprehensive about the situation. Next day the British Consul-General showed me two Imperial Edicts which had been got from the Viceroy's Yamen. The second urged the Viceroys to take an active part in defending their provinces. He asked me what I thought. I said Li could not well do less if attacked, but if he were *not* attacked all would be well. This was apropos of a rumour that the British Squadron would be sent to the Bogue Forts, the main defence of the entrance to Canton. He agreed to that view and I have no doubt passed it on to the Hong-Kong authorities. Li always prided himself on maintaining law and order in all territories under his control, and was terribly hurt at the idea of being superseded, or even assisted, by a foreign force. It was not likely that a man who once said: "Wo pi Tsungli Yamen ta" (I am greater than the Chinese Foreign Office) would tolerate for a moment foreign interference in his Viceroyalty. It was reported that in his indignation at the slur cast upon both his ability and *bona fides*, he said rather ominously: "In that case 'wo k'ai-men'"—in other words, "Let loose the rabble." It was his boast and his pride that by the sheer terror of his name he kept the "yi-wan wu-lai," or ten thousand scallawags, of Canton City from the burnings and pillaging so dear to their hearts. On leaving the British Consulate I

met the German Consul-General and others. It was a painful scene. In his hand he held a telegram announcing the assassination of the German Minister in Peking and the wounding of his Secretary on the 20th June; also that only three Legations were still standing on the 23rd. I could only say that I had no confirmation. I had been in the habit, with the Viceroy's full approval, of passing on to the foreign Consuls all I knew of the situation. I recommended them to see the British Consul-General, and deprecated a sudden lowering of Consular flags. I advised them to ask for confirmation at once from the Viceroy, and I lost no time in doing so myself. The German Consul-General, a very clear-headed man, saw at once that there was nothing to be gained by any action calculated to cause local excitement.

The next day, July 3rd, at 10.30 a.m., I received the Chefoo Commissioner's telegrams confirming the miserable news of poor Von Ketteler's murder, and stating that all the Peking foreign residents were in the British Legation, and in great straits. I took the telegrams at once to the Viceroy. He was much upset, especially as he had evidently received some confirmation, and did not hold out great hopes of safety for the unfortunates in the Legation. I told him I had wired three times to inquire about the Inspector General, but Chefoo did not appear to have any news. Li threw up his hand, a gesture he often used if deeply moved, and said: "Who can know what has become of him?" I naturally asked if I could be of any help, little thinking of what his answer would be. He put his hand on my shoulder and said: "You as Canton Commissioner must superintend" (or take charge of—the expression used was "Tsungli") "all the Customs Offices in the Two Kwang until we hear again from the Inspector General." He spoke kindly but solemnly. I accepted this mandate and told him I would do my best to keep things going until better days should dawn. The details were soon

settled and all the Two Kwang Commissioners notified of the "emergency measures" during the crisis. I also notified the Consular Body. The Customs Superintendent (Hoppe) got his orders to give me all the money I wanted. He was a genial old chap—very fond of a good dinner—and only once said, "I suppose you will keep an account of all I give you." I said: "Oh, it is better than that. I'm going to pay it all back as soon as the Inspector General 'comes out again.'" I always kept up the idea that everything was abnormal and temporary, and that at any moment the Inspector General might be expected to "ch'u-lai," i.e. "turn up" again. I was with the Viceroy again on the 6th July. Tsêng (King East) had joined him, evidently with a view to his journey North. A long talk followed, chiefly about the Customs Service and its future. Li showed a very intimate knowledge of Sir Robert Hart's character and methods of administration. He commented on what he called his failure in what he considered should have been a chief aim of his stewardship, namely to leave behind him a number of trained Chinese able to fill the highest posts. He said: "Are there any such men in the Service?" and asked me point blank if I knew of any. I said: "Perhaps not just now, but if the end could be borne in mind it was not too late to make a beginning." But all the time, although appearing to blame Sir Robert Hart, he constantly interjected: "If we could only get at the Inspector General he would be of use." It seemed, however, tacitly admitted by them all that there was little hope.

I had previously suggested the inexpediency of any hitch occurring should Inspector General, Deputy Inspector General and Chief Secretary all have been swept away together, and said that in such a case it would devolve on the Statistical Secretary in Shanghai—a member of the Inspectorate General Staff—to carry on the current work until new appointments were made by the Chinese Government. I had begun

to act on this principle myself, and had arranged with the Two Kwang ports that all reports—statistical and returns—usually sent *direct* to the Statistical Department at Shanghai should continue to be so forwarded. Much subsequent trouble would have been avoided had the Statistical Secretary assumed charge at once, and not bothered his head about either local officials or Consular officers. It was his right to do so, and the *fait accompli* would not have been disputed. The fatal thing at that moment was to “K'ai-ch'ueh,” i.e. declare a vacancy, and so give a chance to schemers outside the Customs Service, who were glad enough to fish in troubled waters. This by the way. Li soon got off the Customs and on to the larger question of China's position *vis-à-vis* the Foreign Powers. I tried to find how far he would be inclined to go in coming forward as China's spokesman. He said Foreign Powers were already acquainted with his attitude and that of the other Viceroy, i.e. to protect their borders and keep order within them. As I said before, he was biding his time, and in my own mind I felt more than ever sure that he, and he only, was the man of the hour.

The next day, 7th July, I received a telegram from the Chefoo Commissioner stating that the Inspector General's message of the 25th June had come by courier. As soon as I could get away from the office I went to the Viceroy and saw him about 5 p.m. He told me he had later news and that the British Legation was holding out. He added that its gunfire had killed a great many Chinese, including some of the Boxer leaders, and that the rest were afraid to go on with the attack. Li spoke about suspending interest on the foreign loans and said there was an Imperial Edict about it. Kung and Tsêng were both present. I argued strongly against any such fatal move, and described the inevitable result to China's credit both then and, possibly, for ever after. I also reminded them all—and the point seemed to have been over-

looked—of the existence of collateral security bonds solemnly signed by China's representatives at the time of issue of several of the more important loans. Were those bonds also to be disavowed? If not, they were practically "call money" and China would lose on the one hand what she might possibly save by unpaid interest on the other. Of course we all knew that Li would be the last to recommend any such folly, and no doubt he only mentioned it as a *ballon d'essai* to draw us out! Afterwards I had a talk with King East Tsêng, a relative of the celebrated Tsêng Kuo-fan, Li's former patron. He was noted for his outspokenness. Li was sometimes impatient with his English-speaking Chinese secretaries—especially if they were too insistent in exhibiting their foreign knowledge—and on one occasion said to Tsêng: "Your words come out of your mouth like a waterfall." The little man made the dignified reply: "Your Excellency, the returned Chinese students say that their Western knowledge is best left behind at the gate of your Yamen." Li only laughed and bore no malice. I had known Tsêng in London in the 'Nineties, and I remember he once blurted out to me in a London drawing-room at the time of Sir Claude MacDonald's appointment to Peking: "Why is he sent to us? We are not black men!" This was apropos of Sir Claude's previous post in Nigeria—a useful reminder of Sir Robert Hart's dictum that the Chinese have retentive memories!

But to return to Canton. It was evident that the Viceroy was prepared for the worst. Next day (Sunday, 8th July) I received a telegram from London saying Foreign Office appreciated reliable information. The Viceroy was much gratified. On the 9th July I was with him again, and found him not only ailing but very despondent. The intimation from the British Government about the authorities in Peking being made *personally* responsible for outrages put him rather in a quandary, especially as the intimation was

conveyed to him officially. The position was truly complicated. The Emperor Kwanghsu and the Empress Dowager were in abeyance and even their existence uncertain. Prince Tuan was head of affairs in Peking and had Boxers and troops. His son, aged sixteen, had been solemnly and legally declared as Heir to the Chinese Imperial Throne. He had been so declared before the Boxer movement was heard of. The Viceroy said to me: "Tuan's son may make a good Emperor but he has a bad father!" This revealed the whole situation to anyone acquainted with the Chinese mind, and accounted more than ever for the "sitting-on-the-fence" attitude. Next day Tsêng came to lunch. A plan was in existence that might have solved a good many difficulties, but Tsêng said he feared the Viceroy was too old to play his part. Next day, 11th July, I was in the Yamen. Things were more cheerful, as rumour was persistent that all hands were still unhurt in Peking. I took advantage of that, and had a long talk to Dr. Mark about the Viceroy's health. The old man suffered from indigestion, got a chill on his stomach and then had diarrhœa. Dr. Mark fully realized the gravity of the situation and his own responsibility, and would not have hesitated to call in foreign advice if deemed necessary. My own observation of Li inclined me to the belief—afterwards justified—that his indomitable spirit would outlive the frailty of his natural body and keep it going at least for a time. He was then taking Valentine's Beef Juice regularly and it seemed to suit him.

Kung and I discussed the financing of the Two Kwang Customs. By that time I was able to estimate the exact sum per month I should require from local funds to keep them going. Kung was hopeful that there had been no massacre in Peking. Li evidently had taken heart again, and I was confidentially informed he would leave for the North on the 17th July. A lull followed, but I was at the Yamen on the 16th. It

was clear that the Viceroy had definitely decided to go. The Viceroy listened to all that was said as to his remaining at Canton. More than once he seemed moved, but again shook his head and said : " Shang yü, pu kan wei." (I dare not disobey an Imperial Edict.) On the following day the news of his reappointment to Chihli was published, thus closing the door to him at Canton. Only a reappointment could retain him, and he accordingly left for Hong-Kong the same evening. With him left Tsêng and Liu Hock-sun (Liu Hsueh-hsun), in whose house on the Bubbling Well Road, Shanghai, he was to live. The question of my accompanying him to Shanghai whenever he should go had been mooted once or twice before, but on the 16th July it was finally decided that I should go with him to consult with the Statistical Secretary in my capacity as Superintending Commissioner of the Two Kwang as to how the Customs Service was to be carried on pending the reappearance of the Inspector General, Sir Robert Hart. As previously noted, the Viceroy had asked for my views, and I had told him that the most feasible plan would be for the Statistical Secretary, as the sole surviving Inspectorate officer on the spot, to carry on the work of the Inspectorate. The Viceroy saw the force of this, but still wished me to accompany him and " shang liang " (consult) in Shanghai.

The Viceroy travelled North in the steamer *Anping*, Chinese flag, but I went in the C.P.R. *Empress* steamer and reached Shanghai in time to proceed with Lord Li Ching Fong, Shêng Hsüan-huai and many others in the small Chinese steamer *Kwangchi* to meet the *Anping* at Woosung. We then heard for the first time that the Statistical Secretary had been appointed Officiating Inspector General by the Nanking Viceroy, Liu Kung-Yi. Li's only comment was : " Only the Tsungli Yamen can make an Inspector General." He no doubt was not altogether displeased at the *faux pas* of his Nanking colleague, besides having his own opinion of the over-haste in stepping into dead

men's shoes. Li went, in the first instance, to the Yang Wu-chu, or Chinese Bureau of Foreign Affairs, in the Bubbling Well Road, and later on to Liu Hock-sun's house, where he remained during his stay at Shanghai. Meantime a confidential telegram had reached me from London to the effect that further sidelights on the situation would be appreciated in the right quarter. The Viceroy had authorized these "sidelights" from time to time and they had been found useful. I give one as a specimen: "At present China is more an agglomeration of autonomous provinces than an Empire. Each Viceroy is administering his own domain and maintaining order therein by mutual agreement (between themselves). A central authority is not yet in sight, but will be evolved later if Foreign Powers will co-operate with provincial governments in maintaining China solid (i.e. renouncing all ideas of partition)."

On the 20th July we were confidentially informed from London, "Viceroy proceeding North causes suspicion. Wire reassurance." I wired: "Suspensions absurd. As Viceroy of Chihli his presence North must make for a speedy settlement and should command sympathy and support." "Absurd" was really not too strong a word, and I must confess to my amazement at the attitude of the foreign community at Shanghai towards perhaps the one man who could really be of service. Li was, of course, too well acquainted with "the slings and arrows" which had come his way during his long career to care much about the rather petty slights sought to be put on him by people who ought to have known better. But they had all pinned their faith on Liu Kung-yi, without reflecting that he had neither the power nor the influence of Li, a very Saul amongst the Prophets. The situation, too, had its amusing side, and Li was not lacking in a sense of humour. At first no one would call on him, but the sight of Li placidly playing the part of grandfather to a collection of young relatives in Liu Hock-sun's

garden was too much for some of them. I was approached by one representative of a Great Power: "Of course, you know that officially we cannot recognize Li, but, as *an old friend*, don't you think I might go and see him?" Li sent a most gracious answer and the visit duly came off, and was, moreover, followed by others, and the blockade was raised in friendship's name!

But the end of all our troubles and anxieties was drawing nigh. I was with Li again on the 23rd July, and told him I had a telegram from the Inspector General's Secretary in London saying the I.G.'s long silence "considered worst omen," and suggesting that a cipher message from Robert Hart to his London Secretary should be tried for. I left the suggestion with him, and the next day, 24th July, the Viceroy said to me for the first time: "Your Inspector General is still alive," and I wired the news to London at once on his authority. I was told afterwards that this message "put off" indefinitely the Memorial Service contemplated in St. Paul's Cathedral. It was discredited in many circles; and, as mentioned before, Lo Feng-luh—the Chinese Minister in London—was rather roughly handled by the London Press, but it was nevertheless true. At a farewell visit to Li I obtained permission to resign the commission he had given me. He was very kind and complimentary, and in a few days more I was back at my old job in Canton. I never saw the great Viceroy again. He died on the 7th November, 1901, in Peking, being at the time Imperial Peace Commissioner, to restore the "diplomatic situation" which had been lost to China in the Boxer troubles.

It would be beyond my scope to join issue with the dissectors of his character. His praise, with not a little dispraise, has been sung by loftier harps than mine: notably by the late Alexander Michie, and more recently by the well-known writer J. O. P. Bland. On the whole I prefer Michie's verdict. It is more

kindly and has the additional advantage of being based on a good deal of personal intercourse over a number of years. Ku Hung-ming, a Chinese modern-day philosopher with rather a sharp tongue, once upon a time remarked about Bland : " How can an ill-natured pessimist possibly know what is good for China ? " Still, it is but fair to say that his masterly analysis of Li is not marred by any such blemish. The pessimism, if any, is all reserved for his own Government, in a sentence of considerable " bite," giving his reasons for not devoting any great space to the consideration of Li Hung-chang's diplomatic relations with Great Britain.

Chance gave me the opportunity of recording my own impressions in the only vehicle open to a Commissioner of Customs. In the *Pakhoi Decennial Report* (No. 2 of the Series, 1892-1901), under the prescribed heading of " Famous Officials," I wrote :—

" Of the three Viceroys who have held sway at Canton during the decade, Li Han-chang, T'an Chung-lin, and Li Hung-chang, the last-named is incomparably the most outstanding. All three have passed away, but the name of Li Hung-chang will remain in history. Called to office at Canton in January 1900, after a protracted and arduous career in the service of his country, it was not long before the salutary influence which he invariably exercised over the minds of his subordinates began to be felt throughout the whole Canton jurisdiction. Piracy afloat and robbery ashore began perceptibly to diminish, confidence revived, and many schemes for local improvements laid aside or abandoned were once more brought forward. In fact prospects at Canton were never brighter than when the outbreak of ' Boxerdom ' (May 1900) in the North put an end for the time being to what might have proved the dawn of a new era of provincial prosperity. As a consequence of the Northern troubles Li was re-transferred to Tientsin, and finally left Canton on

the 17th July, 1900. He was soon afterwards appointed an Imperial Peace Commissioner, and died at his post on the 7th November, 1901. It was at first feared at Canton that the departure of the Chung-t'ang would be the signal for the outbreak of passions hitherto held back by his restraining hand, but, luckily, the provincial administration—aided somewhat, it may be, by the shadow of a great name—stood firm. Exterior calm was at least preserved, and the sporadic cases of rebellion and riot which marked the close of the year were dealt with promptly and effectively.

“As one whose duty it was, as Canton Commissioner—temporarily charged with the superintendence of the Foreign Custom Houses within the Two Kwang jurisdiction pending the reappearance of the Inspector General (Sir Robert Hart)—to be somewhat intimately connected with the great Viceroy during the dismal days of the Peking Siege, it may not be out of place for the writer, now that the aged Statesman has passed away, to record the unwearying efforts of the Chung-t'ang to prevent the final crime at Peking, which he, best of all, knew must mean the ruin and disgrace of the country he loved so well. Whatever softening influences could have made themselves felt in the counsels of the distracted Empress Dowager and the infuriated Prince Tuan were without a doubt supplied by Li.

“Other Viceroys did yeoman service in their respective spheres, but Li was in the eyes of his countrymen the man of the hour and the only one who could save China. Full of years, sick in body, but unbroken in spirit, he responded nobly to his country's call, and he died as he had lived, with harness on his back. In very fact—

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.”

CHAPTER XIII

Li Hung-chang after death—At W. T. Stead's "Julia" séances.

I HAVE MENTIONED that after parting with him at Shanghai on the 25th July, 1900, I never saw Li Hung-chang again, but on the 15th January, 1910, at a special sitting of the Julia Circle with W. T. Stead and a few friends, with Mr. Robert King, Psychic and Medium, Stead opened the proceedings with a prayer. After which he explained: "We simply sit still, and if the Medium sees anything he will tell us, and if anyone comes from China we can ask questions and talk to them."

I should mention that I had brought a high Chinese official with me, referred to in the dialogue as His Excellency. I must compress what followed, but the original detailed notes of the various conversations are in my possession.

The Psychic said: "I see a tall, thin figure, dressed in a Chinese costume. There is an air of dignity about him. I don't know who he is. The figure comes and stands between Mr. King and His Excellency."

The Psychic then said: "I see General Gordon. He stands behind His Excellency and says he knew him many, many years ago."

Question by Paul King to His Excellency: "Did you know General Gordon?"

His Excellency: "I met him in Hong-Kong."

The Psychic: "General Gordon says, 'It was at an official reception of some sort. I forget the exact details.'"

His Excellency : " I remember he spoke to me at an official reception."

General Gordon : " I'm trying to throw my memory back. Yes, I remember. Is there anything he would like to ask me ? "

His Excellency : " Have you seen Li Hung-chang, our old friend, on the other side ? "

General Gordon : " Yes, often, often, often. He will be with us presently."

Gordon then said that Li had a difficulty in communicating with us, although he was actually present with him. The Psychic continued to speak and was apparently now in touch with Li.

Li said to His Excellency : " Go to Peking in July. Prepare, do not force things."

Later on the Psychic said : " Li Hung-chang is speaking to Mr. Paul King. ' You know I thoroughly trust and rely upon you. Fail me not when I desire to use you for the good of my race. You are English. Fail me not.' "

His Excellency asked Li : " Do you think Prince Ch'ing will be in power long ? "

Answer : " No, he will not."

His Excellency asked : " Who will succeed him ? "

Answer : " That for the moment I cannot tell you. I hope in the confusion that will result at that time we shall have the opportunity of pressing forward those schemes we desire should be accomplished."

His Excellency said : " I am returning to China. I wish you well, Li Hung-chang. I hope you will help us."

Li : " I will. I still live for my country."

Supplementary sitting on the morning of 17th January, 1910.

Same Psychic presided. He said : " I sense Julia here. Myers is also here. They are pleased that so much was got through at the previous sitting. Myers

says, 'It was a difficult task—much more so than appeared from your end, but we succeeded beyond our expectations. Paul King brought very good connections with him. He himself is sensitive of great power and it was chiefly owing to his presence that the *rappports* were made.' ”

The Psychic continued: “Gordon is here. He is saying, ‘You accomplished much work on Saturday, much more than you imagine, for you have opened up a channel between the East and the West that has never been accomplished before. Li Hung-chang was very much astonished that he could with so much ease come into contact. I do not know whether you are aware of it, but Li Hung-chang has a great admiration for the Chinese gentleman who was present, and also for his friend Paul King. It is very important. The result of that sitting will be modifications of the internal policy of China. When efforts are made from this side to influence Prince Ch’ing, remember it is difficult to do much, as his character is somewhat weak and shift. Do not expect too much, be not impatient. Good will come.’ ”

Contact failed and sitting terminated.

On the 31st October, 1910, Stead wrote to me :

“Li Hung-chang came last Wednesday week and sent a message to your friend in China (His Excellency). Last Wednesday a Chinese, who gave the name Wang-fu, although he admitted it was not his real name and said we would be much surprised if we knew who he really was, came and said, ‘I am asked to tell you that Mr. King will be of much use when he arrives in China.’ ” (I was due in Shanghai in April 1911.) “ ‘He will be specially guarded and guided, for the work in hand will be of extreme importance and work great changes. I bid him to work for the good of the Chinese race. There lies before him much work, the nature of which will be

revealed to him when the occasion arises. Above all tell him to be very discreet, as he is surrounded by those who wish him ill.

“ ‘ It will be necessary for him to exercise great care in all that he does. We are relying upon him, may he not fail us as we need his services. I know him as one whose condition is such that we can work through him for the advancement and glory of our whole race.’ ”

Stead added : “ This came, and without our asking or seeking it, while we were sitting round the fire at Wimbledon.”

At a subsequent sitting at Cambridge House, Wimbledon, on the 2nd November, 1910, with the same Psychic, voices and raps were heard. A voice sounding between Miss Harper and Mr. King said :

“ I am glad you are about to return to the sphere of labour wherein you are so eminently fitted to share the work to be done. It will have far-reaching consequences. Go forward, my friend ; I greet you with love and joy.” (Gordon.)

The Psychic announced : “ Head of young Chinese behind Mr. Paul King. Thin face, bright blue cap with red button, smiles and bows with crossed hands. I get the telepathic thought, ‘ Come, we want you ; come, we need you. We call you. Come. Come.’ ”

The Psychic again : “ Another spirit. Ching-lu, old man with long grey moustache. Can see no hair. Thin broad cheek-bones, full forehead, wears a yellow robe with blue border.”

Paul King : “ Possibly Li Hung-chang.”

The Psychic again : “ He nods, points long finger to you. I can see Gordon talking to Li Hung-chang at the back. The voice says, ‘ The time is nearly arrived, but take care, take care. Exercise great care. Beware the north-east section. Exercise great care, and if near Hankow be careful, be careful. Serious, very serious. Great outcome.’ ”

IN THE CHINESE CUSTOMS SERVICE

The Psychic : “ The voice goes on, ‘ Serious, very serious. Great outcome. My beloved children once more uprising in a consistent manner. The beloved forbears help. All goes well. We want you, fail us not. We will direct you.’ ”

The Psychic : “ Somebody is saying, ‘ Don’t worry yourself. It will be all right. Hopeful, very hopeful of the future.’ To Paul King, ‘ I ask you to carry with you, my dear friend, thoughts of joy, happiness and peace to that Eastern Nation whose borders we contact at Tonkin.’ ”

The voice had previously said : “ Briand has acted rightly and will be reinforced by those of great service, not only from my beloved country, but Europe as a whole.”

Dr. Quain, a spirit, interposed : “ Break your circle now and sit later. Much force here to-night. Someone is trying to get at you from Boston. If you go to Los Angeles—prepare to meet us. You will go, but do not hurry. Close your circle now. You will get direct voice later.”

Sitting terminated.

The next communication was on the 4th January, 1911. I was not present. Stead wrote to me :

“ Wang-fu came again. He said, ‘ I want to thank you (Stead) for the help you have given us in our movement. The great power which we have derived from your circle has enabled us to come into contact with your forces and much good work has been done. You will hear shortly of the spreading of reform; the forces behind us are making great progress. Tell Paul King we are anxiously waiting for his return, as he will be much used as a means of communication. Great things are in progress and will materialize shortly.’ ”

On October 27th, 1911, we both being in Shanghai, His Excellency (the Chinese official who was with me at the sitting of 15th January, 1910) asked me if the

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troubles in Wuchang, 10th October, 1911, had been foretold at that or other sittings. As far as I remember the warning (to me) was "be careful if near Hankow!"

On the 20th February, 1912, being at the time Statistical Secretary in charge of the Shanghai Office of the Peking Secretariat, I wrote Stead a short *résumé* of the situation created by the revolution in China, with the understanding that if used in any public way my name was not to appear, and in my covering letter I said :

"The psychic side (of the Chinese revolution) as set forth at your 'circle' sittings has been strange and very striking and hard to explain on ordinary grounds. A strange thing was the mention of Hankow as a point of danger, for at that time no one specially expected a revolution on a large scale, and assuredly we did not look for it to begin at Hankow. Canton was the spot most people considered the probable *venue* of an uprising. Then none of us knew, not even His Excellency himself, that he was likely to come into it and play a great part.

"My own share has not yet come to pass, but it is fair to admit that I may have something to do with much needed reform in the Chinese Customs Service."

Stead wrote again on the 4th March, 1912, and told me that at the small private séances held by him and his daughter Estelle in his house, Li Hung-chang had been very persistent. One night his daughter was alone in the drawing-room; she had an impression that Li came, but she could not recognize him. He only said : "Woe, woe, woe!"

"An hour later," continued the letter, "I returned home and went upstairs, not knowing what had happened. Li wrote with my hand warnings as to coming trouble. He said the revolution will cost China Thibet, Mongolia, and Manchuria, and that everything ought to have been sacrificed to the unity of the Empire. He was grieved, much grieved, at the way things were going."

IN THE CHINESE CUSTOMS SERVICE

The last letter I had from Stead is dated the 8th March, 1912. In it he noted that since I left Li had scarcely ever been able to get through at the séances held by the Psychic, but that he frequently came to him (Stead) and his daughter when alone. This was just before he started for his ill-fated voyage on the *Titanic*, and went down with her on the 15th April, 1912.

On Easter Sunday, 1912, just two or three days before he sailed in the *Titanic*, he wrote to his devoted secretary, Miss Harper :

“Somehow I feel that something is going to happen, somewhere, somehow, *and that it will be for good.*”

It was in Stead's mind to visit China and take a hand in reform matters there, and he had been urged to do so by influential men in the new régime. He might have been an evangel of great good ; but Fate ruled otherwise, and we may borrow for him the words Tennyson wrote for another. He “passes on his happier voyage now,” leaving a wonderful memory behind in the hearts of those who were privileged to know him—a memory of a sympathy that never failed any human creature, and a courage that would face the last extreme in this or any other life !

CHAPTER XIV

Effect of Boxer incident on my Service career—Transfer to Pakhoi—Charge preferred against me by British Consul—I.G.'s unsatisfactory attitude towards it—I fall ill with Sprue and reach England in a dying condition.

I HAVE DEALT with the Boxer incident at length, and will now turn to its effect on my own career in the Customs. The fact that the I.G., on resuming charge of the Chinese Customs Service on the relief of Peking by the allied troops, had taken no notice of my administration of the Custom Houses in the two Kwang provinces during his temporary disappearance from supreme control, did not particularly disturb me, and it was therefore somewhat of a surprise when news began to filter through that I was likely to "get into trouble," I use the exact phrase as it reached me by word of mouth, for my share in the affair.

I had received some time previously a brief letter of thanks from the I.G. for my congratulations on his safe deliverance, and as he had no doubt received my detailed report on all that had passed in Canton between the Viceroy and myself, I felt there could be no possible ground for any misapprehensions of my action throughout the whole incident, and it was not until the spring of 1901 that this comfortable feeling was upset. A despatch came appointing one of the most senior British Commissioners to succeed me at Canton, and directing me to hand over charge and proceed to Pakhoi, the smallest and most unimportant port in the Kwangtung province. It was accompanied by a private letter from the I.G. in his best Pecksniffian vein: "He was obliged to provide for Senior Com-

missioners and younger men must make way for them." There was a postscript in which he said that Pakhoi was a quiet place for the study of Chinese, in which he had been told I was rather weak. This was pretty good, considering that I had been twenty-six years in the Service, had passed all the prescribed tests for Chinese then existing, and had, besides, composed a work in Chinese for which no less a personage than his Excellency Sheng Hsüan-huai had written a preface. I had asked (1889) the I.G.'s permission to dedicate this book, *A Treatise in Chinese on Western Physical Culture*, to him (R. H.). Permission was not only not accorded, but no notice at all was taken either of my letter or of the book itself, a copy of which was sent to him when it appeared. I was told by my father-in-law, the late Dr. Alex Williamson, LL.D., that the I.G. had mentioned the book to him and said: "Something within me forbade my acceptance of the dedication."

The book was printed and published in Shanghai by the Christian Diffusion Society, of which Dr. Williamson was the founder, and as he was contemporaneous in China with Robert Hart and a leading scholar, it did not do to ignore the thing altogether, especially as the venerable old doctor, six feet five inches in his stockings and a most remarkable personality, was actually resident in Peking at the time.

I probed the myth about my Chinese and soon found the explanation. The senior Chinese clerk at Canton—a man of doubtful loyalty to the Service—had visited Peking and spread some artful tales about me. I had placed the Chinese Secretariat at Canton on a proper business-like footing, and given a responsible post in it to a Chinese of high education both in his own language and in English. It was an innovation at the time, but has since been generally adopted throughout the Service, and has removed one of the grievances of the Chinese staff under the old régime. The anachronism of the Commissioner

keeping the *English Register* of Chinese correspondence in his own handwriting, while intelligent Chinese in his office, quite capable of doing it for him, were not allowed access, is now, happily, a thing of the past.

It was, of course, quite true that in the early days of the Service there were very few Chinese clerks capable of performing the duties of Chinese Secretary to the Commissioners, but this was not the case in Canton in 1900. The Chinese Secretary was naturally entrusted by the Commissioner to deal with many matters of a more or less confidential nature, and it was no doubt jealousy of the man selected for the post that prompted the lying tales about me.

This "bogy-man" of not knowing enough Chinese, with all sorts of vague penalties in the background, appears in a good many of the circulars poured out in an endless stream for the guidance of the Customs Service. The bound-up volumes from 1861 are known as the *Customs Bible*. They shed considerable light on the I.G.'s character and methods, and deserve—at least some of them—a publicity they will perhaps some day get. It was, however, distinctly funny to suggest that a man who had been entrusted with the conduct of Customs affairs in Canton by the I.G. himself, and in the two Kwang provinces by Li Hung-chang, was in any way deficient in Chinese knowledge. "By their fruits ye shall know them"; I am content with the verdict of the Chinese Government, expressed in the conferring on me of the Decoration of the Double Dragon for "loyal" work at Canton during the Boxer period. That the foreign Chief of the Chinese Customs should have rewarded it by practically official degradation is a fact about Robert Hart and not about me!

To my successor, who was furious at having been appointed to Canton after his urgent application for a Northern port, he wrote that the *Decennial Reports* were due and it was necessary that the *Canton Report*

should be over the signature of a Senior Commissioner. This was, of course, all "bunk," as all concerned knew very well, but it served a double purpose.

The *Decennial Report* is a document in which *inter alia*, quite a varied *alia*, the Commissioner was allowed to spread himself, if so inclined, on many matters outside the actual trade of the port. As the *fiat* had gone forth that my conduct of affairs there under Li's orders during the Boxer period was to be ignored, it would hardly have done to give me an opportunity of writing about it. My successor had come from home leave, was not in touch with the situation, and might therefore be relied on to say very little about a subject on which he had no direct knowledge. It was also more than suspected that his transfer to Canton was meant as a hint to a man who, financially, was well able to please himself, that if he didn't like the place, "resignation" was always a way out!

But on the surface the I.G. appeared to be actuated by perfectly immaculate motives.

So to Pakhoi we went. Opened to foreign trade in 1876, it had never flourished, as the harbour was inconvenient, and the subsequent opening up of the West River ports robbed its "hinterland" of any latent potentialities. Altogether a very deadly lively sort of place—insanitary even from a Chinese point of view, and, what was much worse from my point of view, nothing of interest in the work. Steamer visits were few and far between; a very small staff was necessary for the Customs. There was only one foreign merchant—a German; a British Consul and a French Vice-Consul, with a French postmaster and one Catholic priest, completed the international "make-up." The Church Missionary Society maintained a fairly large establishment, and the Basel Mission of Canton was represented by one German family. But as these heterogeneous elements did not mix well, their mere presence was of little social value. Consequently

life there was very dull from the outset. My wife and I are of very different temperament, but we both love to be surrounded by people in whose lives we can mingle, and to be deprived of human intercourse with congenial people such as obtained at Hong-Kong and Canton was the unkindest cut of all. However, that was a matter to be met philosophically, and we were proceeding to do so when a very heavy blow fell on us—this time from Heaven itself. The anchorage at Pakhoi is some four miles distant from the town and landing-place, and, in an unlucky moment, I consented to the harbour master, a fine old specimen of an American sailor, taking me round the harbour to view the buoys and other nautical marks. After we had pushed off and were flying under sail in his six-oared gig, I noticed there was no stern sheets awning, but he laughed at the idea of the sun doing one any harm in the beautiful fresh sea breeze we were then enjoying. I had on a sun-hat and had brought a small umbrella, and for the first two hours or so enjoyed the trip as much as he did. But the return trip was very trying, and, on landing late in the afternoon, I felt ill as I had never felt before. I crawled up to the house, and dragged myself upstairs with a curious dunny sensation in my head and my feet feeling like lumps of lead. That night I was taken violently ill—purging and vomiting, with frightful pains in head and limbs. Next day I was weak, but seemingly over the attack whatever it was ; but some weeks after I noticed I was losing weight : on leaving Canton I was at my usual weight of a hundred and sixty-three pounds and in good muscular condition. However, I did not take the matter very seriously and went on as usual, though always feeling slack and weak.

I had heard a good deal about the disease known as “sprue,” but neither I nor the local doctor had ever seen a case of it. Consequently, we were not prepared to recognize at once what was the matter with me. I read up Sir Patrick Manson’s book on “Tropical

Diseases " and got very little comfort therefrom. He gives very little hope for recovery from sprue, especially when the disease occurs in middle age (I was forty-seven): so I wrote to "French Peter"—Peter Sys of Shanghai, an irregular practitioner, whose treatment of sprue, though ignored by doctors, had been remarkably successful. I sent him all my symptoms, and his reply confirmed my suspicions that sprue was at the bottom of my troubles. He also sent his powder and treatment, but urged me to come to Shanghai for his personal care with the least possible delay.

Meanwhile I was getting gradually, very gradually, worse; and to add to my misfortunes, I got a very severe chill while late in the office just before Christmas 1901. I got home somehow, but next day was too ill to leave my bed, whereupon I wrote to Peking more insistently and urged immediate relief. My previous account of being ill had evidently been disbelieved or, at any rate, ignored. I have no wish to pile up the agony or seek to harrow my readers by a detailed story of the horror of sprue both to body and mind. Reduced to the last analysis, *sprue is slow starvation*: whatever the victim eats, he cannot assimilate: it all passes from him as it enters his mouth.

In my case, the mind outstayed the body. I wrote the *Pakhoi Decennial Report* (Period 1892-1901), the *Trade Report* for the year 1901, and cleared up the year's work generally while lying on my back in bed. The mental effort probably kept me alive, but by the time my relief arrived I had wasted to a hundred and twenty-three pounds: I could neither stand nor walk for more than a few minutes at a time. The Sys powders also, no doubt, checked the progress of decay, although apparently powerless to effect a cure; but my chief debt is to the devoted care and nursing of my wife, and it grieves me to this day to think of the awful burden she bore so bravely.

We had little outside help and still less sympathy

—Heaven only knows why. It was a favourite adage of Protestant missionaries that they were there primarily for the saving of Chinese souls and bodies. Perhaps they thought they had no concern with the ninety-and-nine. Anyhow, that was our experience in a very dark hour, indeed, of need. There was nothing for it but to man ourselves with dauntless air and leave the rest to Fate.

At last relief did come, and, more dead than alive I got on board a P. and O. steamer at Hong-Kong homeward bound. I draw a veil over that horrible voyage. My one dread was that they would land me somewhere *en route* as unfit to proceed. I used to crawl into the saloon for meals in order to keep up the illusion in the ship's surgeon's mind that I was getting better. For the rest I lay all day in a semi-comatose condition, but I always held on to one idea, namely, that if I could get home and to Smedley's Hydropathic at Matlock I should get well. What I was like on arrival is set forth in the next chapter.

My last few weeks in Pakhoi, which, indeed, threatened to be the last few weeks of my life, were greatly cheered by a change in the British Consular arrangements which sent a very old and good friend of mine, the late Mr. E. F. Bennett, to Pakhoi. It should be explained that the British Consulate at Pakhoi is administered by the Consul of the neighbouring port of Kiungchow in Hainan. Mr. Bennett's predecessor did not often visit Pakhoi, but his temporary residence amongst us invariably led to trouble. I had previous experience of the same officer elsewhere, so was more or less prepared for possible "ructions." One day it was reported to me that a foreigner was wandering about in the port without visible means of subsistence, and in due course the individual concerned came to see me. He told the usual tale and described himself as an American, but omitted to state that he was in any way under the protection of the British Consulate.

The British Consul was not in residence at the time, so I undertook to pay the man's passage to Canton, where he said the U.S. Consul-General would look after him. He was quite destitute and I gave him some clothes. He expressed great gratitude and left at once for Hong-Kong.

Now, it so happened that the steamer he left by also brought back the British Consul on one of his periodical visits. The day after he left I received an official despatch from the Consul, demanding an explanation of my conduct in "deporting" an American subject (*sic*) under his protection. I immediately went round to the Consulate, as the Consul and I were then on amicable terms, to explain matters, but found him in a state of mental excitement that was painful to witness. He danced round his office like a madman, shouting: "You've done it now—you've done it now: and I will report you to Peking."

As he was not in a fit state to listen to reason I went back to the office and informed him officially, as I had already done privately, that there was no question of anybody being "deported"; that I had assisted the man out of charity; and that he had left of his own free will, etc., etc. I sent the letter round in the official chit-book, which came back with the word "equivocation" over the Consul's initials. I took no notice of this "street-boy" ebullition, but reported the whole matter of my dealings with the distressed American to Peking, sending the page of the chit-book as a specimen of the amenities of official correspondence probably unique of its kind. It was well I did so, for in a few weeks a vaguely worded holograph letter reached me from Sir Robert Hart, referring to a very serious complaint that had been made against me by the British Consul, and calling on me in no very friendly tone for an explanation. As this letter crossed my official report on the whole case, it was unnecessary to do more in reply than refer to the date and number of my despatch.

I never heard anything more from Peking on the subject, but received a very humorous private letter from the U.S. Consul-General in Canton, to whom, apparently, the British Consul had also sent a denunciation of me, thanking me for my kindness in helping his national, but saying that he feared, as in another celebrated historical case, I "had fallen amongst thieves," as the individual concerned was well known as a "bad hat," and had, no doubt for reasons good, not reported at the U.S. Consulate-General in Canton. A little later a letter from a colleague in a West River port described how the man had turned up there, dressed in my old clothes and sun-hat, and had extracted a sum of money from him on the strength of his "friendship" with me!

Later on, when I was half dead from sprue, I was told by one who had seen it that he had never read such a vituperative document about any man or thing as the despatch addressed by the British Consul to the Inspector General of Customs about me. Of course, it was well known that I was under a cloud, or at least this interpretation was no doubt placed on my transfer from the scene of my activities during the Boxer trouble. Under better official traditions the whole outburst of the Consul would have been ignored, or if noticed I should have been shown the original accusation. But the Customs was run differently! What eventually happened to my Pakhoi denunciator will be narrated later on, when Fate brought us together again.

CHAPTER XV

Life at Smedley's, Matlock, and partial recovery from sprue—I return to China against all medical advice—Visit Inspector General in Peking in June 1904—Sent to Wuhu—Return of sprue threatened—Make personal appeal to I.G. in September 1906 and obtain transfer to Ichang.

WE ARRIVED IN LONDON on the 19th April, 1902, I in the last stages of sprue and my wife utterly exhausted by the long months of anxiety and nursing.

Escorted by our third son, then a schoolboy, I somehow managed to reach Smedley's Hydropathic at Matlock and was put to bed. The two doctors who examined me shook their heads, and I overheard one say to the other as they left the room "Vitality very low." Next day I was fitted up with a Smedley male nurse and started to try to live. The nurse mentioned sympathetically one day soon afterwards, "The gentleman in the next room died the night you came here and we didn't expect you to live a week." I didn't wonder. My legs from the knee downwards were black with œdema and quite useless. I was wasted to a shadow of my former self, and was so utterly weak that I had to be lifted up and down. The doctors interfered but little, and I was content to lie there and feel at rest.

Luckily the weather was fine, and I had my bed drawn up across the southern window, and basked in the glorious sunshine and wonderful view of "gigantic Masson," as the guidebook described the hill facing Smedley's.

The fine weather lasted a whole fortnight and

served to tide me over a very critical period. On both sides I come from a long-lived race, and as the doctors said afterwards, "You must have wonderful reserves of vitality somewhere in you." But it took all four months to bring me even to the threshold of a recovery and fully two years before I could eat and digest. My wife and I left Matlock in October and returned to London. The medical verdict was "We cannot do much more for you here (at Smedley's)," and the recommendation was to go back to London and try and live an ordinary life. I had regained some weight, but for many months could do nothing but lie on a sofa and read. At last one day I looked in at the London Fencing Club, and, shaky as I was, essayed to take a lesson from my old master Vitale. He and others were shocked at my appearance, but I was amongst old friends, who cheered me up, and next morning I was none the worse. So I repeated the experiment, and to my joy and amazement realized that a way out of the utter wretchedness and misery into which sprue had plunged me had been found. Within a few months I regained digestive power and was soon nearly up to my normal weight of a hundred and sixty pounds.

But every doctor I consulted was dead against my return to China. It was lucky for me that my leave was not of the "sick leave" order, as I had completed the proper term of service to entitle me to two years' leave of absence in the spring of 1902, and had stuck to my job until relieved in the ordinary course. There was, therefore, no obligation to get a medical certificate before returning to China, and I was free, so to speak, to take my fate in my own hands.

We left England at the end of March 1904 and voyaged to New York, travelled over the New York Central to Cleveland, Ohio, then due south through Cincinnati and Memphis to New Orleans; thence by the Sunset Route to El Paso and onwards through Los Angeles to San Francisco. Thus in a few weeks

we had more than a glimpse of a large portion of the great continent.

It was bad luck to come across a poisonous cream tart between Los Angeles and San Francisco ; it very nearly resulted in a relapse into sprue !

But the sea voyage to Japan and China set me up again, and we arrived in Shanghai in June 1904 in fairly good health considering all we had been through.

I saw Sir Robert Bredon—then in charge of the Inspectorate General branch office at Shanghai—and soon learnt that the benevolent despot in Peking had selected me for Wuhu. I was at last to get the normal pay of a Commissioner, but beyond that fact there was nothing much to be joyful about.

As my leave had not expired, it seemed wise to seek another interview with Sir Robert in Peking. I had not seen him since the Boxer trouble and I hoped there might be a chance of finding out what was really at the bottom of his peculiar treatment of me after that incident. Sir Robert seemed touched at our coming to see him and we lunched with him and Miss Kate Carl, who had not long completed her famous portrait of the Empress Dowager. He was charming throughout the whole meal and talked freely about himself and his future plans. I had previously been given a hint that he would like to forget all about the incidents that arose round the Boxer trouble. So it seemed ; and I was glad to accept the tacit forgiveness implied in his manner for all the sins I had not committed in those never-to-be-forgotten months. As we took leave of him I thanked him for the prospective increase of pay at Wuhu. In a curious Palace of Truth sort of style, he said, " Why do you thank me ? You've nothing to be grateful to me for." He added, " I suppose you will be back here some day," and when we said we hoped so he remarked, " Ah, I shall not be here then." It was a moment of mutual self-revelation, due probably to subjective causes. He had been through the Shadow of the Valley and so

had I. He had quit himself like a man all through the siege and had remained at his post when all was happily over. To quote Consul Parker, "He was the noblest Roman of them all." I too had learnt something from the two years of introspection to which sprue had condemned me. So we took leave of him, feeling that possibly a new era for us might be dawning in which we should not have again to strive against the hardest of all barriers in official life—the ill-will of the Chief—and in due course I took over charge at my new port.

Wuhu, opened in 1876, had never been properly developed. The office and the outdoor staff were miserably housed in rented buildings of a very unsuitable type, and, generally speaking, life there did not promise very much for us. And so indeed it turned out. The Commissioner's house was a new one on the hill, and the assistants occupied the old Commissioner's house next door.

The new house was an attempt at American architecture, with a huge entrance hall. Unfortunately it had been built without proper supervision of the Chinese contractor, consequently trouble was not long in coming. One night I was disturbed by a loud crack—like a pistol shot—apparently coming from the roof. The sound was repeated, and next day I went up the roof ladder and had a look round. I am not an expert, but I knew enough to wish for expert opinion on the extraordinary jumble of badly placed timbers which constituted the roof. I wrote to the Engineer-in-Chief in Shanghai and his answer was a revelation to me, as I knew nothing of the history of the house. But he did, and was not surprised to hear my tale of woe. The house was none of his design or building. His withers were unwrung, as he had been completely put on one side in the matter, but he was none the less eloquent on the shortcomings of Commissioners who thought they were architects. The whole trouble was in the too flat arch in the hall

and the faulty construction of the roof beams. There was supposed to be an iron girder in the flat arch, but "soundings" failed to locate it. I unearthed a wizened little man, who had worked as a carpenter under the contractor who built the house. The contractor himself was nowhere to be found; small wonder.

After a while he told me the whole story, with little touches added. Some of it I was able to verify at once. The house was practically without foundations, and the bricks and mortar, especially the latter, of the poorest quality.

The little carpenter was doubtful about the iron girder, but "opined" (our old friend "Kung-pa") there was some iron somewhere. The Engineer-in-Chief arrived from Shanghai and proceeded to examine the whole structure. He too had heard about the iron girder, so we took up the flooring of the upstairs hall to search for it. As soon as the planks were off I put in my hand and fished up a brick, then another, and still a third. After I had picked out about a dozen bricks I said to the Engineer, "I can't see any girder." He turned round sharply, saw the bricks, and said; well, I won't repeat what he said. By this time I had got into the *furor* of the thing and was resolved to find the girder or perish with the house. At last the carpenter found it. It was a thin rod of iron about half an inch in diameter! The Engineer-in-Chief tore his hair and said the roof must come off at once to save the house from instant collapse. I said, "What about us who have been appointed to live here." He said, "Well, of course, you must do as you like, but *I* say the house is dangerous!"

So I wrote privately to Sir Robert in Peking and told him all about it. In due course I received a letter from him which I would fain hope he repented of later on. In it he remarked that many houses condemned by Commissioners had lasted for years, and added that if I was afraid to live there, there was

always Szemao, where the Commissioner's house was a bungalow. Now, Szemao was a frontier port on the Burmese border—miles in the interior and no means of reaching it except overland with Chinese transport and conditions.

In my reply I affected to treat it as a joke—though mindful, as Sir Walter Scott remarks in *Ivanhoe*, that it is just as well not to be too jocular with earthly potentates. However, I risked it and wrote, "As to Szemao I am like Bret Harte's hero, 'I kin eat biled crow, but I don't hanker after it.'" I followed this up with an official report from the Engineer-in-Chief as to the state of the house. I added that my wife and I proposed to go on living there, but should it fall down I feared there would be "great loss of Customs property," and I remained his obedient servant! A three-line despatch came back to do what was necessary as cheaply as possible. "That means a new roof," said the Engineer-in-Chief, so we came downstairs and lived in the dining- and drawing-rooms while the repairs were being effected.

It was a relief when the last of the old roof was safely on the lawn, but only a beginning of fresh troubles. As the foreign mechanic in charge of the work could not speak Chinese, I was a good deal about on the scaffolding and shared his consternation as time revealed new features in what the Engineer-in-Chief described "as a model of how not to build a house." When it came to hoisting the heavy tie-beams into position, the four walls simply crumbled away and huge fissures in them were apparent. I had read somewhere of how to deal with such cases. We made a strong solution of liquid Portland cement and poured it into the cracks from above. We poured and poured—the Engineer-in-Chief approving as the best, but not the only thing that could be done. The alternative to his mind was always to raze the house to the ground, and this had to be done a few years later. But meanwhile the liquid cement proved an

excellent palliative, and we got the tie-beams up and the light new roof of corrugated iron in position after some six months of hard work in all weathers.

After about eighteen months my inside began to go back on me once more. There was a good deal of excavation going on all round in connection with the new settlement, and it never does to interfere with "the old bones of China." Sickness was rife, and I got an attack of dysentery and had to take to my bed at an unfortunate time—Midsummer—with my senior doctor-assistant away on a temporary charge at Nan-king. All the other medicos—missionary—were at the hills and only available spasmodically. My friend, the late Dr. Hart, of the Wuhu Native Hospital, warned me seriously of the dangers of dysentery to a man with a "sprue" history. So when things quieted down a bit and my senior assistant came back, I got short leave and showed myself to another old friend, the late Dr. McLeod of Shanghai. He knew all about the I.G. and I had very little to explain. He felt with me that a personal appeal, backed by his medical certificate, might get me a better port, i.e. one nearer Shanghai, in case of a recurrence of sprue. So to Peking we went, armed with a medical certificate recommending a seaport. We paused for a few days at Tientsin. My wife remained there while I proceeded to Peking. This was in the month of October 1906.

The interview with the I.G. took place in his house. He had aged a little, though not perceptibly, since 1904. But he had adopted the air of an invalid and sat with a blanket round his loins. He was also peevish and irritable, and after a first remark that I looked very ill, seemed unwilling to continue on that topic. I produced Dr. McLeod's medical certificate and also a certificate from Dr. Brown of Tientsin. Both recommended a port near the coast, and preferably near Shanghai, in case of a recurrence of sprue symptoms, which in my case might easily prove

fatal. He glanced at both certificates and asked some questions about Dr. Brown—where he came from and where I had met him—and then began to pull up the blanket round him and generally fidget about. He finally said, "You can go to Ichang or you can have some sick leave." Now Ichang is 1,000 miles up the Yangtsze River, and sick leave meant enforced resignation, unless I could get a clean bill of health at its expiry. So, as may be imagined, neither alternative afforded me the slightest chance of the relief I was seeking for. I merely remarked that Ichang was far inland, while the medical certificates recommended the sea coast. He again said, "Well, you can have sick leave, but I've no other port for you." This, of course, was not more than technically true just at the moment. It was known that the man designated for Soochow, a place in close proximity to Shanghai, was anxious to return to Ichang, so a solution agreeable to two of his older employees only awaited a stroke of his pen! But no doubt once again "something within him," psycho-analysis perhaps would explain, kept him back from an obviously graceful act. No one who knew him was in the least surprised, and I remember the remark of one of the people concerned—"I know all about the tender mercies of the I.G." He preferred to take no further chances!

I wrote to my wife in Tientsin, letting her know how we stood. Ichang was at least a change, and a change even seemingly for the worse is not always so. We therefore made up our minds to proceed to Ichang if the I.G. would grant no better terms, so I again sought an interview with him.

On entering his den I said at once, "I've come to say good-bye, Sir Robert, as I am leaving Peking to-morrow for Ichang." He looked rather taken aback and said, "But I thought your wife said you could not go there." It was now my turn to look surprised, as I did not know at the time that my wife had written to Sir Robert Bredon from Tientsin in

protest about the transfer to Ichang, but after a pause I said, "You have ordered me to Ichang so I must go there." Another pause, then he said, "Well, you must proceed there slowly, as I cannot have Mr. . . ., the Commissioner then at Ichang, disturbed." At this I nearly laughed outright; it was so palpably absurd as coming from him, who had never been known to consult anybody's convenience but his own in dealing with the pawns he played with. I can be Pecksniffian too, so I said with much earnestness that I had of course intended to proceed by the faster railway route as far as Hankow, but as he did not wish me to hurry I would now proceed as I had come, by sea and river *via* Shanghai.

We parted silently.

No sooner had I arrived back in Shanghai than I was bombarded with telegrams from the Ichang Commissioner urging that I should arrive there at the earliest moment. Here was proof positive of the old man's "Hokum" I had suspected in Peking. He merely wished to show how careful he could be of people's feelings when he had the mind to.

Christmas was not far off when we left Shanghai, so it seemed appropriate to send Sir Robert some greeting by the way. We sent him one of our ordinary visiting cards, inscribed, "Ave, Imperator,* te salutant." A nod was always as good as a wink and even better to a man of the I.G.'s quick perceptions, and we knew he would not fail to fill up for himself and understand the asterisk, more eloquent than words. The sequel proved that he had done so as will appear later on. The jest was bitter enough and true into the bargain. The journey inland might easily have meant death to me and was in fact so interpreted by many of my friends.

However, we got up to Ichang after a voyage that was not uninteresting because of its novelty above Hankow. About 400 miles of difficult water separates the two ports, and navigation is only possible in day-

light. In particularly tight places it is the custom to have a sampan proceed in front of the steamer with a man armed with a sounding-pole, who yells back the result of his findings to his crony on the bow of the steamer *en route* to the "old man" on the bridge. Our particular "old man" on this occasion was a well-known character on the "middle Yangtsze," i.e. that portion of the river between Hankow and Ichang. He was a very big, very fat man, and what he did not know of the river was negligible. He had other gifts besides. He could sing hymns with unction and even pathos without prejudice to a wealth of different and more lurid "language" when anything displeased him. With the ripe juicy wit of the old seasoned sailor-man he easily worsted in a religious argument that should not have been started the clerical secretary of a travelling American bishop who was amongst our fellow voyagers. The "Bop" deplored to me afterwards the untimely zeal and want of tact displayed by his subordinate in giving, so to speak, a chance to a blasphemer "to get away with the goods," but all was peace in the evening when we sang hymns together to the accompaniment of a portable squaller in the shape of a travelling harmonium. To avoid religion when at table I started on foods for the fat and how to get rid of undesired accumulation on the bony structure of the human frame. Next morning the skipper would not eat his breakfast and was great on the subject of a "starve cure." He kept it up until tiffin was all cleared away and then returned to his cabin, not in the best of tempers. I watched and waited not in vain. From out of the cook-house about tea-time came the Captain's "Boy," bearing in his hand a large covered-up dish. I pounced on it; it smelt remarkably good, and further investigation disclosed a huge mass of Irish stew. "Captain, he velly hungly," said the impassive Celestial, and passed on to the skipper's sanctum. By and by, I duly observed the returned empty, and, still

later, the skipper, once more rotund and jolly, was himself again.

My observation of sea captains has been long and varied, and leads me to the conclusion that they are either very fat or very lean. But fat or lean, it is best to let them die in their sins if they have any, rather than intrude with new thoughts that rarely help and more often do real harm. "Food and drink" have much to answer for in making the human's lot in this troubled world even more unhappy than in the nature of things it must be. But, for better or worse, it is wiser to let people alone and not risk the amenities of life by propaganda of any sort.

CHAPTER XVI

*Life at Ichang in 1906—I play Golf in the bed of the Yangtze River—
Trip through the Ichang Gorges—Interesting Postal Work—
Transferred to Canton.*

THE FIRST SIGHT of Ichang as the steamer threads her careful way to the Customs jetty is impressive and bizarre.

In the low-water season the Ichang Bund is forty feet above the river. On the opposite bank on lower ground three triangular redstone hills stand out conspicuously like miniature Egyptian pyramids. Beyond, and all round, are glorious wooded hills. No wonder that Archibald Little grew eloquent in describing its beauties. He even went the length of claiming for it—in view of its exceptional position, screened by high mountains from all Northern winds—a special climate unknown in other parts of China. This we found to be actual fact. Our time in Ichang was destined to be short—though we did not know it—but in obedience to some instinct I set to work at once to study local conditions and see as much as possible of the surrounding country. The port itself consists of a short and badly finished, because irregular, Bund. Chinese dwellings and foreign houses jostle one another, but as the foreign settlement does not back, as is too often the case in the other riverine ports, on the native city, there is space behind for purposes of health and pleasure. The community owned quite a nice little athletic ground, and many were the good games of hockey and football played there when the Navy was in port. In my time, the Navy was represented by

the H.M.S. *Kinsha*—the famous pioneer merchant steamer on the upper Yangtsze owned and operated by the late Archibald Little.

On Little's retirement from Ichang, where his name will ever be held in high honour, the *Kinsha* was purchased by the British Government, and blossomed out into a full-fledged British gunboat with a right good captain and a right good crew. Her presence added much to the amenities of the port. We had also visits from German and American boats, and occasionally one or other of the upper river gunboats would be in port. To the German I was indebted for a delightful trip through the Ichang Gorges.

Ichang, as the kicking-off place for the upper river traffic, is a great house of rest for missionaries. The China Inland Mission, the Scottish Church, American Presbyterian and Episcopal, Scandinavian, and Canadian Missions are all either residents or frequent passers through. The little Scottish church, with its typical minister—the Rev. William Deans—was particularly dear to us, and I used to love to listen to his scholarly discourses and the old Scottish hymns before and after. The Catholics were also strongly represented and, as usual, were old residents long before the opening of the port to foreign trade and Bibles in 1876.

The Customs staff was small and the trade insignificant, but the postal work with its fleet of upper Yangtsze post-boats was full of interest and even romance. Our couriers ran by land as well along the old Imperial highways to far Chengtu, and farther, even to the Thibetan border.

I recall the sad fate of one of them. He was a good-looking youth and attracted the attention of the buxom spouse of the landlord of one of the "rest-house" hotels. The inevitable followed, and he was found slain on the road, but, so rumour said, not by robbers.

A novel experience was playing golf in the bed of

the Yangtze. Our harbour master, Mr. E. Molloy—a fine specimen of an Australian—was an ardent golfer, and was reckoned as one of the longest drivers in the Far East. He naturally thirsted for something beyond the narrow confines of the recreation ground, so one day he and I scrambled down to the water's edge in the middle of the river—forty feet below the Bund level—and teed our balls for a down-river trip. It was the old original Scottish game, straight ahead for seven miles, with the bones of sunken junks and high stone boulders as “hazards”—a unique and most exhilarating experience. Aided by a carrying wind, Molloy made some truly astonishing drives, while I plodded behind as best I could.

After that I used invariably to carry a cleek instead of a walking-stick in my afternoon rambles behind the foreign settlement, and had quite good fun, considering my own limitations and the necessity of getting home before dark. Two trusty “bearers” always bore me company to ensure that I should get home safe and sound. Although not more timorous by nature than my fellow-men, I have ever followed the piece of good advice given me by Sheng Hsüan-huai after poor Colin Jamieson's mysterious disappearance: “No Chinese official should ever wander abroad—especially after dark—unattended, although he need not always use his *official* lantern.” In my walks abroad I have always had a trusty henchman keeping me in view. The Commissioner's official servants, if he is of the right type, rather like the idea of their being responsible for his safety.

I have never yet given an order on the subject, but by a tacit understanding between us it was etiquette for me to say I was going out for a walk and they did the rest. May Heaven bless the *sancta simplicitas* of their honest hearts.

Life generally in Ichang flowed peacefully along; the foreign community—chiefly missionary—changed but little. After Wuhu the house and surroundings

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appeared like an earthly Paradise, and we were quite sorry when a cryptic telegram reached me, "Does the state of your health allow of you going to Canton.—Hart." I wired back "With pleasure—King," and shortly afterwards the official transfer came and our brief, too brief, sojourn was at an end.

CHAPTER XVII

My second term as Canton Commissioner—Viceroy Chou-fu ; recollections of him and Detring—Viceroy Chang Jên-chun and the Tatsu Maru II—Japanese arrogance and I.G.'s extraordinary acquiescence.

I TOOK OVER CHARGE at Canton on 13th April, 1907, and plunged at once into the vortex. Canton in 1907 was a very different proposition from 1900, when the great Chung-T'ang Li was Viceroy. The unrest and piracy that Li had successfully put down had recrudesced and was threatening to call for foreign intervention. I was fortunate enough, however, to find the former Haikuan Tao-tai of Tientsin, His Excellency Chou-fu, reigning as Viceroy, and my old friend Kung Hsin-chan a member of the Canton Government. I had also other good friends from the never-to-be-forgotten days of Li Hung-chang's viceroyalty.

My predecessor, a very active and capable man, had been *persona grata* to Chou-fu's predecessor, the then, and since, well-known Ts'ên, and had, perhaps, not been as careful as he should have been of the susceptibilities of the smaller fry. The result was an attempt to influence Chou-fu to clip the wings of his successor. This took the shape of an order that in future the Commissioner of Customs would not be received by the Viceroy through the large gate of his Yamen, but would be run through the side gate and shown into a waiting-room, as were all but the highest local officials. My friends had tactfully warned me of what might happen when I paid my first visit to the Viceroy, and were working to avoid any such "loss

of face" for me. Personally, I was only concerned about the *first* visit—to demonstrate to all and sundry that the Viceroy had not departed from the old custom of receiving the Commissioner of Customs *via* the large gate. In the Boxer troubles I had gone in and out of the Viceroy's Yamen at all hours of the day and night *sans cérémonie*, although received with salutes, etc., on occasions when ceremony was necessary, and had always considered it as a compliment to be treated as one of themselves rather than as a foreign official. But it was, of course, necessary for the sake of my own influence, as well as the *status* of the *Commissioner of Customs*, not to accept any change from the time-honoured procedure in such matters.

So I waited a bit before writing for the usual permission to pay my respects to His Excellency. I had known Chou-fu in the days of Gustav Detring in Tientsin (1887-89). They were both great men, but could not get on together. Chou-fu held that the whole hierarchy in Chih-li were "lao-po-tzu," i.e. old women, to allow the Commissioner of Customs to lead them by the nose, while Detring, secure in Li's friendship, knew well that he had nothing to fear from the minor officials. So Chou-fu had "to take it out in corns," and rarely failed to do so in and out of season. Whenever Detring took me with him to see the Haikuan-Tao, Chou-fu would elaborately ask about the Commissioner's family—how many, and were they boys or girls—and then turn to me with similar questions. He knew, of course, that Detring was on his Chinese side very sensitive about his four daughters and no son, and the fact that I had four sons in my nursery—about which he would overwhelm me with congratulations—gave the necessary "fine point" *à la Chinoise*. I remember Detring telling me of a regular row he had with Chou-fu when both of them appeared to have departed very far from the way of the Superior Man. Chairs and even tables were

chucked about, and many hard words exchanged. Possibly Chou-fu was attempting "to rule barbarians by misrule," but it did not come off at all with an obstinate old Prussian like Gustav. Eventually, however, they became quite good friends—with the exception of the "pin-pricks" chronicled above. It took some little time, but eventually all was well, and the question of the large gate was closed by its being opened to my unworthy self, and I was soon on the old terms of intimate "lai-wang," i.e. intercourse, with the highest provincial authority that does so much to facilitate current business in a viceregal port.

The subsequent interview reminded me of a similar scene in the same place in 1899 with the old Viceroy T'an, Kung-pao, and I again defended my predecessor's "ming-sheng," or reputation, with the same arguments that were successful then, i.e. that he meant well and only desired to do his duty; and ended by saying, "Anyhow, he's not here now," at which they all burst out laughing, and we never had another wry word.

Canton has ever been in the forefront of progress in China, and I was soon deep in schemes for local improvement, bunding, harbour works, bridge-building, railway projects, native customs, reforms, and water police—to say nothing of our own Customs plans for rebuilding on a large scale.

One of the first questions to become acute was the suppression of piracy in the Canton Delta. The matter was in the hands of Admiral Ch'un—a young and energetic man, who had already shown that he at least knew how it should be dealt with. But there was considerable pressure on the Viceroy to introduce some measure of foreign control and I had been requested by him (the Viceroy) to report, but as his tenure of office was coming to a close, no very decisive action was likely. His successor was reported to be Ts'ên, Kung-pao, known as Ts'ên, the "Tiger," during his previous term of office at Canton as Acting Viceroy. Everybody was "sitting on the fence" awaiting his

arrival and nobody dared do anything. However, in the end he was given another post, much to the general relief, especially to me, as a very awkward position had arisen.

The Customs quarters at Whampoa had been lent to Ts'ên as a summer residence by my predecessor, and Ts'ên had sent orders to have the place again prepared for the reception of himself and family. It was a foreign-built house and formerly used as the British Consulate. There was a fine garden, and I was utilizing it as a sanatorium for the members of our staff when sick. It was therefore very disconcerting to be called upon to give it up to the "Tiger" and his family. My hesitation to do so, as a matter of course, spread consternation in local official circles, and I was begged and implored not to get them all and myself into trouble at the outset with the redoubtable Ts'ên. I, of course, had no such intention, but was only concerned to put the matter on a more dignified (for the Customs) footing.

I therefore stressed the points of having to act without the authority of the Inspector General and the possible results in ill-luck to us all—especially to those who lived in the house—after turning out sick men and their families. Then I yielded up the house—with, however, the useful reservation, as it afterwards turned out, that it was to be for the *personal* use only of the Viceroy and his family.

A few weeks later, when it was apparent that Ts'ên was not coming to Canton, I was able to secure the return of the house to its lawful owners by quoting the reservation clause.

I had, of course, reported the matter to Peking, and had been told that I must "expect to be thrown overboard" if the matter was referred by Ts'ên to the Inspector General, but as my whole action had been governed by a wholesome fore-knowledge of that fact, no harm resulted. The episode is illustrative of the extreme delicacy of the relations of a Commissioner

of Customs, or even of the Inspector General, with the high Chinese officials of the Imperial régime. How to maintain the *imperium in imperio* without "loss of face" on either side? Truly, sometimes a difficult problem.

In September the new Viceroy, Chang Jên-chun, arrived, and I was again fortunate in being well received by him. His principal secretaries, Wên Tsung-yao—afterwards a leading spirit in the Republican movement of 1912; Wei Han—the noted naval authority of the Foochow Arsenal; and Hsüeh Yung-nien were all good friends of mine from former days.

Chang Jên-chun talked excellent Kuan-hua, and very little English was ever spoken at our interviews. He took a great interest in speech and writing, and I well remember a little dissertation he gave us about "Wên-li." How each class of Chinese society had a "Wên-li" of its own—official "Wên-li," merchant "Wên-li," newspaper "Wên-li," and so on. I mentioned the recent Esperanto congress and he seemed to think that a "Wan-kuo-hua," i.e. universal speech, had some points.

In October the question of piracy came up again—not because of any particular recrudescence of such occurrences, but, possibly, owing to the wish of the British authorities to press the matter on the attention of the new Viceroy, and I was again instructed to lay my views before him.

This I did, and suggested in addition that the newly organized water police, which were useless inside Canton Harbour, should be bodily transferred to a new head centre at Chentsun, a native Customs station in the Delta, together with their four steam launches, thirty row boats and a *personnel* of over 500. This was an attempt to "kill two birds with one stone," as the water police cost \$90,000 a year and the "common people" would be glad to see them go!

His Excellency Chang had plenty of backbone, as

was shown in his attitude to the Consular body on Shamien when they attempted to dictate to him that he should make the first call. This he declined to do, and, after "arguing" for ten days, the Consular body gave in, but not before Wên Tsung-yao had told its august members, individually and collectively, that it was "quite feasible to conduct all business without ever seeing His Excellency." That clinched a matter which ought never to have arisen. Just about this time some new rules about the importation of arms and ammunition were promulgated and quite a storm in a teacup arose over the meaning of the word "once." The dictionary said "on one occasion and one only," the Chinese text also favoured this view; but if it were acted upon every "shootist" in China would be up in arms, also at once!

Eventually "once" was held to mean "at one time," and all was peace, except amongst the poor birds and beasts, destined to be slaughtered by a practically unrestricted importation of sporting ammunition under the authorized interpretation. Truly there are pitfalls everywhere in the path of the legislator.

I remember writing about it at the time and remarking that though one was prepared to hear that "once" in Chinese meant twice or more, it could be wished that two diametrically opposed English renderings had not been used on this occasion. As before mentioned, foreign pressure was being applied about the repression of piracy. This was chiefly owing to the fact that a number of steam launches engaged in inland navigation had been placed under foreign flags. To entitle such a vessel to fly a national flag it was necessary to prove *bona-fide* foreign ownership to the satisfaction of the Consul concerned. This was not difficult. The Chinese launch owner sold his launch to a foreigner, who produced the bill of sale to his Consul and duly obtained a foreign register. At the same time the foreign owner mortgaged the launch to the original Chinese owner. By this simple

FRAUDULENT USE OF BRITISH FLAG

expedient, which no Consul could go behind, the real Chinese owner secured foreign protection for his launch without risking his original proprietorship. Quite a large fleet of steam launches under foreign flags was thus created, and whenever one was pirated the whole machinery of foreign intervention was invoked by the registered owner. Of course everybody, from the Viceroy downwards, knew that the foreign ownership claim was "mao-chung," i.e. fraudulent, but in the face of the bill of sale and the subsequent Consular registration and recognition it was difficult, if not impossible, to disprove the ownership. The foreign demand was that protection must be given by the provincial Government to all steam vessels within its jurisdiction, failing which the foreign Powers would be compelled to intervene actively. Now the one bugbear of all provincial Governors was this often used threat of foreign intervention, which, if carried out, would be sure to bring official ruin to all concerned, besides causing "loss of face" to China by the abrogation of her sovereign rights in her own waters. In consultation with Wên Tsung-yao and Wei Han we had laid a scheme of river patrols before the Viceroy. Its essential features were a guard boat at each passenger station, an armed steam launch patrol between each station and inspecting vessels, small but powerful steamers, to go up and down to see that patrols and guard boats were active. The inspecting vessels to have a superior official on board, responsible to the Viceroy *direct*.

The land forces were to work in concert, "robber nests" were to be hunted out and all pirates captured were to be severely dealt with. The Customs made a chart of the three rivers and the Delta, showing the exact situation of the passenger stations and the mileage of each patrol section. This was the extent of Customs *active* co-operation.

It was not proposed to place any of the patrols, guard boats, inspecting steamers, etc., under the

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Customs, or indeed under any other control than that of the Chinese Army and Navy. Nor was it intended to seek foreign assistance in any way, the idea being to avoid at all risks any chance of foreign intervention. That this might be imminent was only too apparent, and I had been asked by the British Consul-General whether the question of Customs control over piracy-repressive measures had been discussed between the Viceroy and myself.

About this period, November 1907, the British Admiral, Sir Arthur Moore, visited Canton and interviewed the Viceroy. The suppression of piracy was fully discussed and the advisability of Customs control advocated. I was not present at the interview, but the Admiral told me afterwards that the Viceroy was greatly opposed to any Customs control. He added, "And he quoted you." This gave me an opportunity to lay the whole of the Chinese case before the Admiral, and I gave him at the same time my own reasons for deprecating Customs control. He had, of course, never heard of the "Page" case at Canton. Page, a British employee of the Canton Customs, was sent one night to watch for salt-smugglers, and, as usual on such occasions, carried a rifle. Next day a Chinese appeared at the British Consulate and stated that his brother had been shot and killed by Page the night before. Page was accordingly arrested by the Consul-General and duly committed for trial.

To make a long story short, he was eventually acquitted, but the *moral* remained for our guidance in the Customs, namely that under extra-territoriality a British subject, charged with a criminal offence, could not plead that such offence was committed by him in his capacity as a Chinese official, but must stand his trial like anybody else.

The Chinese authorities had acquitted Page of all blame, but of that fact the British authorities took no heed.

I pointed out to Admiral Moore that if the Customs

should undertake the repression of piracy, complete immunity from British criminal procedure must be secured to them in the execution of their duties. Bloodshed there must be, otherwise the aim could not be obtained, and if the Commissioner of Customs, or any of his foreign assistants, were liable to be hauled up before his Consul on a charge of murder, it was manifest that the job could not be undertaken on such lines. The Admiral saw the point at once, and also the further difficulty. The British authorities in China were bound to administer British law as it stood in the Statute Book, and who was going to alter the procedure? There was also the question of the various nationalities in the Customs, making an international agreement necessary for any such waiving of national laws.

The Admiral was quite alive to the doubtful reality of the so-called British ownership, and on one occasion had sent for a reputed owner (a British half-caste) of some thirty launches flying the British flag in the Delta and three rivers.

After some questioning as to the amount of his, i.e. British, capital invested, the individual said the launches were his, but admitted the existence of Chinese partners. Admiral Moore took out a chart and asked this British owner to point out to him the different places in the Delta at which his vessels traded. The British owner did not know. *Tableau!*

At the time there were about forty launches under the British flag and nearly as many under the tricolour. Probably nearly all "mao-chung," and this fact should of course have weakened the case for foreign intervention, although naturally the obligation of the Chinese Government to put down piracy for the sake of its own subjects remained.

In reporting on this matter to Sir Robert Hart I was able to quote from one of his despatches to the Canton Office in 1867, and to tell him that the situation he therein sketched out—in the wonderful terse

English of which he was a master—existed at the time I was writing about.

Already the Hotspurs in Canton City had taken alarm, and violent protests were being made against any form of Customs interference. I added : “ Along our own useful lines, as laid down long ago by you, we can travel safely and profitably to the nation we serve, but outside of them we shall but incur odium ourselves and,” using his own phrase, “ weaken by our interference the hold which native officials ought to have over native Chinese.” This was, indeed, the Alpha and Omega of the whole matter—this weakening of native rule by foreign interference ; and I had no doubt in my own mind that whatever doubtful temporary advantage might be secured the principle was utterly wrong, and I never hesitated to say so. The result was very much as I anticipated. I was criticized by the British for my supposed influencing of the Viceroy against Customs control, while on the other hand all sorts of unfounded charges against the Customs were laid before the Viceroy by his irate citizens.

However, our back was broad and the excitement soon simmered down. A little later a British flotilla, eleven vessels and some picket boats were stationed at various strategic points in the Delta, West and East Rivers with H.M.S. *Cadmus*, Captain B. L. Majendie as Senior Naval Officer at Canton. This was an indirect result of the murder of Dr. Macdonald by pirates on board the ss. *Sainam*, for which sixteen men were executed.

The Viceroy did the best he could under the circumstances. He placed the most noted thief-catcher in Canton in charge of his own anti-piracy measures, and directed him to co-operate with the British commanders. The combination turned out happily. It was the pirates who disappointed us all by failing to materialize !

The British flotilla functioned for something under two months and was then withdrawn, the British

Admiral telling me that he was quite satisfied that the Chinese authorities had the situation well in hand.

Mistakes of course were made—one involving a very irate French Captain, who defied the whole British Navy to board his ship—but good sense and goodwill prevailed and the Senior Naval Officer turned out to be the exact man for the job. I was often reminded of 1900 and old Li Hung-chang. There was no question of Customs control or foreign assistance in *his* anti-piracy programme.

He was the originator of the land-and-water co-operation in chasing pirates. "Are not pirates men?" he would ask, and rap his stick on the floor while the whole Staff sat up in terror. "Well, if they are men, where do they sleep? Hunt out their homes and cut off the roots."

I always urged the Chinese Admiral to use the Army as well as the Navy, and he did so with good results, although owing to troubles down South we had very few reliable troops at Canton.

All this time we were busy with the various building schemes for improving the housing of the Customs Staff. The Yüeh-Han Railway was making very slow progress at the Canton end and the appointment of Sir Chen-tung Liang-ch'êng, K.C.M.G., was of good augury. I remember his telling me how difficult it was for a native of Canton to resist the claims of clansmen of all shapes and sizes, but alike in their utter unfitness, for employment in the railway administration. He remarked pathetically, "What can a man do when his mother offers to curse him for not appointing a favourite nephew to a post he is totally unfit for?" Wei Han, the head of the Chinese section of the Canton-Kowloon line, which was making good progress, had an easier job, as he could always set up his foreign chief engineer's objection as an excuse in such matters.

Sir Frederick and Lady Lugard visited Canton early in 1908. He turned out to be an old school-

fellow of my Rossall brother. The Viceroy was much pleased with their visit and invited Lady Lugard to see his wife, who showed her all over the inner rooms of the Yamen—a very high compliment.

Amongst other bothering questions of the new year (1908) was that started by the proposed new (British) rules for steam launches, but this in its turn was overshadowed, as far as I was concerned, by the seizure outside Macao of quite a large Japanese steamer named *Tatsu-Maru II* on the 5th February by a Chinese gunboat in command of a Captain Woo, for attempting to land arms. Being threatened by Portuguese police launches, Captain Woo decided to bring his prize to Canton, but could only get to Blake Point, fifteen miles below Whampoa, as the *Tatsu-Maru II*, 1,900 tons, had a full cargo of coals on board and drew 23 feet.

The Viceroy at once decided to make a case of it and sent for me. I explained to him that it was neither a Lappa nor a Canton *Customs* seizure, but expressed my willingness to help in the matter. He notified the Japanese Consul of the seizure and informed him that he had appointed Tao-tai Wei Han and the Canton Commissioner of Customs to be his deputies to conduct the inquiry under the joint investigation procedure. It seemed to me to be a clear case of "arms-running," as the ship was under charter with coals from Japan to Hong-Kong, and Butterfield and Swire, the owners of five-eighths of the coal on board, stated that her voyage *round* Hong-Kong Island to the vicinity of Macao—where the seizure took place—was contrary to the charter party.

She had about 1,500 rifles and 40,000 cartridges on board, consigned to a Chinese firm in Macao. There had been rumours for a long time of *direct* importations of arms into Macao from Japan under the ægis of the Portuguese Police Department, and it was felt that the present occasion was opportune for letting daylight into the whole situation, and there is no manner of doubt that the Japanese Government

THE "TATSU-MARU" CASE

would have done the best thing possible in its own interests and for honest trade between the two countries if it had consented at once to the joint investigation proposed by the Canton authorities.

The whole thing would then have been threshed out in open court, the facts ascertained and put on record, and the decision left in the hands of the Wai-Wu-Pu and the Japanese Minister in Peking. Whatever that decision might have been, it would at least have been arrived at according to law, and there would have been no room for the heartburnings that attended the case throughout. But instead of entering into any investigation the Japanese Consul was instructed to demand the instant release of the vessel. It should be mentioned that the joint investigation rules invoked by the Viceroy provide for the immediate release of the vessel under proper bond, pending the final decision at Peking, so there was really little excuse for the high-handed action of the Japanese Government, and its demands, not only for the unconditional release of the vessel, but for the punishment of the officers who seized her, an apology for so doing, and an undertaking not to do such a thing again. It was clearly impossible for the Viceroy to accept any such settlement, and he adhered to his original proposition for a Joint Investigation Court.

In the meantime, however, the time limit for appeal to these rules had run out and the vessel was confiscable if the Chinese Government so decided.

The *venue* of the case was now shifted to Peking, and the telegraph between the Canton Viceroy and the Wai-Wu-Pu (Chinese Foreign Office in Peking) got very busy.

It would encumber my text too much to give even a *résumé* of the messages received and sent. The case was really in a nutshell. The coal charter under which the *Tatsu-Maru II* sailed from Japan to Hong-Kong, forbade deviation between those points, but the steamer was seized in Macao and a Portuguese permit

to land the arms there had been issued. Arms were actually being landed when the seizure was made. The Viceroy held that these facts, not disputed by anybody, constituted clandestine contraband trade and desired an inquiry, which was denied to him by the Japanese Government. Judge, therefore, of the disappointment and disgust felt in Canton when the Viceroy received on the 3rd March, 1908, a long telegram from the Wai-Wu-Pu detailing seventeen points in which China was held to be in the wrong by no less a distinguished person than Sir Robert Hart, the Inspector General of Customs.

I was sent for by the Viceroy in a hurry, and found him much put out and upset. He said he could not understand why the Inspector General could not support him in his demand for a joint investigation. Neither could I—especially as I had been instructed from the same source “to assist the Viceroy generally and in joint investigation.” He produced the seventeen points and I went carefully through them, and was more than ever amazed. There was little of the old I.G. power in them. It was as if he were quite out of touch with the situation and annoyed by it. The Viceroy was not without a sense of humour, and he looked at me with a whimsical smile when he said, “Your Inspector General says we are wrong in seventeen points ; what have you to say about it ?”

I had, as a matter of fact, a good deal to say about it, and told the Viceroy that he had a good answer to each point ; but, bearing in mind my duty to the Inspector General, I added, looking round on the whole assembly, “ I *know* that if the Inspector General were here, and knew what his Excellency and all of us know, he would be of our opinion.” My answers were all laid before the Wai-Wu-Pu by the Viceroy, who meanwhile stuck to his guns and urged the Wai-Wu-Pu to insist on the proposed inquiry. He had lots of sympathy from the outside. The Cantonese, gentry and people alike, were all on his side,

and the whole Consular Body—with the exception of the Portuguese and Japanese—supported his action.

It so happened that the British Commander-in-Chief, Sir Arthur Moore, was in Canton at the time the seventeen points arrived, and he made no secret of his sympathy with the Viceroy and his strong condemnation of those who, in full knowledge of their ultimate destination and use, sought to bring arms into these regions. The Admiral saw the Viceroy. He knew well that China could not possibly be expected to succeed in putting down piracy if such importations of arms could legally continue. His opinion carried great weight and was a comfort to all concerned, and the Viceroy especially was more than ever encouraged to "sit tight" and adhere to the position he had taken up.

The Admiral's view that, if Macao was allowed to import arms in this free manner, it would be quite hopeless to require China to put down piracy or revolution in these regions was largely shared in Hong-Kong, both in official and non-official circles; and the Hong-Kong Government had long ago shown sympathy in a practical way by restricting the export of arms from the colony to Macao. It was openly rumoured at the time that certain highly placed officials in the latter place were "interested." It is, therefore, quite possible that the Japanese Government did not know much about what was going on until the *Tatsu Maru II* was seized, and came in later to father the doings they ought to have prevented. There is little more to record. The Peking Government, over the head of the Canton Viceroy, gave in unconditionally to the Japanese demands, and it was a very sad day for Canton when the news arrived. The Viceroy took it with true Confucian poise and dignity. The whole city was seething with indignation, and a wonderful scene took place in front of the Viceroy's Yamen. The courtyard was full of the notables of Canton, clad in mourning robes and bearing funeral

banners. It was a public and very touching protest. The Viceroy came out, and, standing on the steps, addressed them with the greatest dignity. He deplored what had happened and condemned the weakness that had accepted defeat; "but," he added, "as loyal Chinese you and I must obey now that the Emperor has spoken." Thus ended an episode that reflected little credit on the Japanese and the Chinese Foreign Office. On receipt of the Inspectorate instructions to assist the Viceroy, I had thrown myself heart and soul into the case, and worked late and early with the Viceregal secretaries in presenting it for trial. Only one mistake had been made on the Chinese side in the action of Commander Woo in hauling down the *Tatsu's* flag. He explained that he did so as he expected to have to fight the Portuguese Police launch and did not think he ought to do so under the Japanese flag.

It was an awkward incident, but we took the bull by the horns at once and told the Japanese Consul that we recognized Commander Woo's mistake and would atone for it according to international usage—i.e. by an apology and a salute—and we requested that the flag incident should be considered quite apart from the seizure of the vessel.

But, naturally enough, the Japanese were keen to profit by the mistake, and by putting the so-called "insult to the flag" in the foreground strove to draw a red-herring over the unsavoury trail of their misdoings. Their demands were preposterous in the circumstances. At the Viceroy's request the Customs valuers had gone very carefully over the seized arms—I was present at the examination. There were 500 one-shot Mausers of an old pattern; 960 Mausers, nine-shot pattern, 1884; 40 Winchester carbines, thirteen shots, model 1892. The ammunition consisted of 34,000 Mauser cartridges evidently manufactured in the Tientsin Arsenal, part probably of Japanese Boxer booty, and 6,000 Mauser cartridges, very old, of European make. A very liberal valuation put the

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whole lot at \$6,200 Mexican. Yet the Wai-Wu-Pu had consented without reference to Canton to the Japanese claim for Yen 21,400. The whole claim was for \$218,000, and it was duly paid over at Canton from local revenues.

No one blamed the Viceroy; but the resentment against the Peking Government for its futility, and the Japanese for their overbearing arrogance, especially amongst the better classes in Canton and the seventy-two Guilds—the virtual rulers of the City—was deep and lasting. There has always been a very general desire for “self-government” amongst the Cantonese, and this movement gained additional strength after the Boxer trouble in 1900: when Canton—where there were no Boxers—was called upon to pay its share of the enormous fine imposed upon China by the Powers. The *Tatsu* incident went far to popularize the Separatists’ programme, and the prophecy at the time that the Japanese might one day feel sick and sorry they did not meet the desires of the Viceroy in the case in a spirit of fairness was fulfilled soon afterwards. No one talked boycott or even mentioned the word, but somehow or other the demand for Japanese products in Canton fell off. I was often asked by the Japanese Consul as to the cause of this, but always replied with an urbane smile that possibly the Chinese taste for Japanese products had changed.

Although beaten for the nonce and no League of Nations to appeal to, publicity was still a weapon in the local armoury; and by the help of a very clever and sympathetic American journalist, the tale of Canton’s plucky fight for the right against Japanese aggression went round the world. Stress was laid on the fact that to cope with land and water brigandage, accompanied very often with hideous cruelties on the persons of unoffending travellers, had taxed the powers of the provincial government for years. Most strenuous efforts had been made to repress these pirates, but

difficulties were greatly increased by the fact that they could so easily keep themselves armed through Macao—the notoriously weak spot—in any scheme of repression.

The *Tatsu* case showed that not only were arms being imported wholesale into Macao direct from Japan, but also that the Portuguese and Japanese Governments were prepared to prevent China from interfering with the trade—an illegal trade it must be borne in mind—carried on in China's own waters. All this and a great deal more was put down in plain words, and appeared in the public Press all over the world. It was Canton's only hope that publicity might so instruct public opinion abroad, and especially in the U.S.A., as to render the repetition of any such browbeating of China more difficult in the future. In this it succeeded, but the whole affair shook China's faith in the *bona fides* of Foreign Governments and went far to nourish the growing dislike of the two Kwangs to Peking control. One amusing episode remains to be recorded. A play, entitled "A National Disgrace to be kept in Memory," was staged at Shanghai in which the Commissioner of Customs at Canton played a leading part. In his mouth were put a good many biting criticisms. In the opening scene, he remarks: "My office deals with all cargoes properly, without any partiality." Then officers come in and report to him that the Japanese steamer *Tatsu Maru II* had been captured with arms on board. The Commissioner says: "Hold on, let me report to the Viceroy Chang and simultaneously request the Japanese Consul to investigate the case." In a later scene he comes on again, and relates how a seizure near Macao was made by the Chinese and objected to by the Japanese and Portuguese, who raised a diplomatic trouble with the Wai-Wu-Pu in Peking. He proceeds, "Of course you people know very well that the heart of the Wai-Wu-Pu inclines to foreigners. Moreover, where are Macao waters and where is international sea? The

Wai-Wu-Pu has no knowledge of it at all. Of course they dealt with the case recklessly, but the Canton Viceroy telegraphically refused to yield and the men of Kwanting did the same. But it all proved to be fruitless. It is said the *Tatsu* is to be released this morning, not only this but salutes and compensation are also required. Listen! that is the firing of the guns. Listen! that is the cheering on board the steamer. Listen! that is the bitter cry of the people. I hear all these sounds. I do not say anything more. I can only laugh—Ha ha, ha ha.”

The play was, of course, “writ sarcastic” throughout and is, I fancy, unique. But it shows how deeply the Chinese were wounded by the high-handed action of Japan and the weakness of the Peking Government.

In October 1908 I received by special Imperial decree the Decoration of the Double Dragon, 2nd division, 2nd class, for my services in the *Tatsu* case. This was almost the last special decree issued by the ill-fated Emperor Kwang-hsu. The insignia reached me direct from the Viceroy and not, as was usual in such cases, through the Inspector General. It was not unlikely that the Wai-Wu-Pu, in spite of its invertebrate condition, was as little pleased as the Viceroy and the Canton gentry with the abandonment of the Chinese case by the much trusted and far-famed Inspector General. His action recalled to many the resentment felt in China after the Boxer trouble, when the Inspector General (“These from the Land of Sinim”) contemplated in a philosophic spirit the partition of China amongst the Foreign Powers.

It was felt that a man “who had eaten Chinese rice,” lots of it, for so many years, was hardly the person to appear to suggest and even countenance her overthrow as an independent nation. Sir Robert Hart left China—never, as it turned out, to return; and it is a pity that his almost final official act was so little to the taste of the nation by whom he had been so generously treated and so greatly trusted. Loved he

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never was by anybody, not even by those on whom his favours had been heaped, and least of all by high officials outside the Manchu clique in the capital; but he was trusted, and it seemed to many that in the two instances quoted he had betrayed his trust.

CHAPTER XVIII

A strike of the Canton Steam Launch Guild—My experiences in the British Consular Court as prosecutor—Sunday trading and plague patients—Death of Emperor and Empress Dowager, 1908—Am present at last rites in Canton—The Canton Self-Government Society and the Vernacular Press—The holocaust at the Flower Boats—Laying the foundation-stone of Canton Terminal of Canton-Kowloon Railway.

NO SOONER WAS the *Tatsu* case disposed of than the Viceroy was confronted with a strike engineered by the Steam Launch Guild. This was more or less a Customs matter, and I found myself in the thick of it at once. The ostensible cause of the strike was to get rid of the Customs supervision exercised through a qualified foreign engineer of the machinery and hulls of their launches. This supervision had been brought about in the first instance by the numerous mishaps—many resulting in loss of life—caused by defective boilers and illegitimate methods of raising steam pressure. A favourable device was to interfere with the automatic working of the safety valve!

I had resisted to the utmost the Guild's demand to abolish supervision by the Customs, and had pointed out to them over and over again that the Chinese Customs were either Chinese or nothing. The Guild knew that as well as I did, but insisted on calling the strike before the report on the result of our joint investigation of the whole subject reached the Viceroy. The entire carrying trade in the Delta came to a sudden stop, as far as steam vessels and their tows were concerned. Postal arrangements were also

paralysed, but owing to the exertions of the Postal Commissioner were soon partially restored by the use of innumerable "slipper boats." The Guild knew its power, and also knew that the Viceroy had no force behind him. A general strike therefore invariably effected its purpose. The Viceroy had to give in and suspend the Customs inspection in view of the popular excitement caused by the strike. I acquiesced at once, as I had recognized early in the affair that the ebullition against our control was only another symptom of the general desire of the Canton people for self-government.

In later days these feelings went a long way to help Sun Yat-sen in his attempts to set up the South of China Republic. Curiously enough, too, his former supporter, the redoubtable ex-Viceroy Ts'ên Ch'unhsuan, is now fighting against him—but whether to restore unity in China or secure self-government for Canton is not clear. Ts'ên, a native of Kwangsi, was reported in his younger days, when repressing rebellion in his own province, to have eaten the heart of a notorious but very brave brigand, in order—a common belief in China—to become endued with his courage. Whether this be true or not, the fact remains that Ts'ên's word was law in anything he undertook.

But to get back to Canton and our difficulties there in April 1908. The Launch Guild called off the strike, our only satisfaction being the knowledge that, thanks to the Customs supervision, the whole fleet was in good order and would probably run on for some time without mishaps, and until neglect and a few "blow-ups" would again vindicate the usefulness of our six years' work. I considered the Viceroy's attitude was inevitable. Strikes in Canton quickly lead to riot—which must be either "squared" or crushed, and there were few, if any, men of the Li Hung-chang stamp in power at the time.

About this date it was my painful duty to institute criminal proceedings in the British Consular Court

against a British member of the Canton Customs Staff. The *prima-facie* evidence seemed strong enough to secure a conviction, but the Court—i.e. Consul-General, *plus* two assessors—thought otherwise, and the man was acquitted. Although suffering very much from boils I was in Court the whole time and could not help being—even with my long knowledge of the possibilities of such tribunals—somewhat scandalized at the way things were conducted.

I should premise that it was very hot weather, and the judge was evidently ill at ease. The case for the prosecution having been presented, the accused was invited to go into the witness-box and testify on oath in support of his plea of "Not Guilty." This he declined to do, but was most improperly permitted to make a long rambling speech (not on oath) that ended up by an appeal not to be condemned to the "living hell" of incarceration in Hong-Kong. It appeared afterwards that he had undergone two years' personal experience of the place so described on conviction in Hong-Kong of a similar offence to the one he was being tried for.

In spite of some very real annoyance I could not help seeing the opera-bouffe humours of the situation. Before the trial the judge told me he thought the accused would confess, and immediately after it—with the ink hardly dry on his finding—he remarked quite cheerfully that he thought there was no moral doubt of the guilt of the accused. The leading assessor was a burly Yorkshireman, fond of striking an attitude as a true-born Briton. He played the part with his eyeglass sharply focused on the wicked Customs, but in the Club afterwards he tacitly went back on his verdict and complained that the Customs lawyer had presented the case badly. He was used to being chairman at club meetings, where everyone raves at large and then takes it all back again, and evidently had no idea of the dignity of legal etiquette.

The other assessor was of a different type, some-

what of a Babu, I fancy. He was openly jocose after the trial, in the style of "Not Guilty, but don't do it again," and calmly told me with a grin that he did not blame the accused for not going into the witness-box, and added: "Why should a man hang himself?" It is interesting to relate that this cheery individual was himself convicted in the very same Court not long afterwards, and got two years for a similar offence (embezzlement) but of far larger amounts.

However, looking back on it all now, I do not regret the verdict. I had asked for instructions, and had been ordered to institute proceedings if conviction could be secured. This was, of course, an Irish way of looking at things, and I ought to have wired back, "Be Jabbers, I don't know," and awaited further instructions.

The Customs had hitherto been Sabbatarian—i.e. no steamer was allowed to arrive at Canton on a Sunday—but a determined attempt was now made to introduce a Sunday steamer. The Tung-Wha hospital at Hong-Kong, a Chinese Charitable Society with political leanings, approached the Canton Commissioner with a request that during the plague season in Hong-Kong a steamer should be allowed to leave for Canton on Saturday nights and land passengers on Sunday mornings. They alleged in support the stringency of the Hong-Kong sanitary rules, and said it was a hardship for the Chinese not to be able to *escape* from Hong-Kong on a Saturday night. The steamer people were, of course, all agog by hook or by crook to get permission to trade in Canton on Sundays as on other days of the week, and the Tung Wha directors had induced Sir Chen-tung Liang-ch'êng to take up the matter with me. After a long discussion I got him to see the question in its true light, namely that philanthropic motives were being brought forward under cover of which to introduce a Sunday passenger trade. I suggested that a small steamer for invalids only might be allowed on Sundays

under special medical supervision, but I asked him not to forget that the whole proposal of the Tung-Wha authorities was practically to facilitate the introduction of persons suffering from plague into Canton. I told him the risks were heavy enough as things stood, with dead men and women found daily on the ordinary steamers, and although we could do but little to prevent, we should at least abstain from encouraging such a state of affairs. In the end Sir Chen-tung Liang-ch'êng advised both the Tung-Wha people and the Viceroy against the proposition, and it was dropped for the nonce.

My own position as far as our office was concerned was a simple *non possumus*. It was one of the obligations imposed upon river steamers, in exchange for the many "extra-treaty" privileges accorded to them, that there were to be no steamers on Sundays. We had no staff to cope with more than the ordinary Sunday duty of watching vessels already in port.

I had often discussed the question of plague with the Viceroy. He held strongly to the belief that the disease was not "Kuo-jên"—i.e. not either contagious or infectious—and in that he was right, as the now generally accepted "flea-carrier" theory has proved. He also stated—which was a fact—that plague patients from Hong-Kong often recovered in Canton, whereas 98 per cent. of cases in that colony were fatal. I can vouch for the truth of this. The Canton plague plaister, if placed on the Bubo on its first appearance, gives the patient a 50 per cent. chance of recovery. If the Bubo develops and bursts into the plaister in the first five days, the patient invariably recovers. This medicament was a compound of all sorts of strange things—human ordure included—but it worked, when so-called scientific methods failed in the hands of the best Western medical skill available in Hong-Kong.

Some years afterwards, at a Missionary meeting in Kensington, I listened to a heavy condemnation of the Chinese Pharmacopœia from the lips of a very eminent

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member of the medical profession, and I ventured, when he had finished, to relate my Canton experiences in praise of the wondrous plaister. The great man looked very contemptuous but said never a word; but I could see the audience was somewhat shaken. As I was leaving the room a lady I had never seen before seized me by the hand and said: "I am so glad you had a good word for the plague plaister; it saved my daughter's life." I looked round for my medical friend, but he had gone.

A matter that excited a good deal of interest in Canton was the institution of a Customs College in Peking. This was a Robert Hart creation, and designed to meet the growing demand for a wider representation of educated Chinese in the Customs Service. Following Chinese traditions in such matters, candidates for the College were to be selected by examination in all the large centres of the Empire, and the successful local candidates sent up to Peking. The Viceroy of Canton—a great educationalist—took the project up very seriously, and appointed a highly placed local official and nine others to act with me in the matter. He also lent us the Normal School building—a modern type house on the site of the old Examination Halls—as a place in which to conduct the examinations. Applications to the number of over three hundred came in rapidly in spite of the fact that it was the season of "Ta-shu," i.e. great heat, and the city was full of plague and cholera, to say nothing of devastating floods outside. Canton, too, had just been visited by a storm of almost typhoon force, and people were very "jumpy" generally. But notwithstanding all these drawbacks, Canton gained twenty-two places out of the forty offered. All hands worked together with a will, and the Viceroy was himself present at the closing scene.

I was from the first rather doubtful about the Customs College experiment. The chief source of supply for Chinese clerks in the Customs Service

was Queen's College, Hong-Kong, an old-established concern giving a thoroughly good English education to its pupils. My remarks apply, of course, to Southern China. In Shanghai several excellent schools fulfilled similar functions. But I was always more inclined to advocate the promotion of existing Chinese clerks to assistantships—thus putting them in the line of promotion to all the higher posts in the Indoor Department—than in favour of bringing into existence a new class—men passed out of the Customs College—to supersede, or at any rate to be preferred before, the Chinese clerks. But nowadays both classes are considered available for all Indoor posts, and the system has worked fairly well.

In October Canton was visited by H.E. Liang Tun-yen—one of the most outstanding of the modern Chinese. I sent him to his inland home by the Customs launch *Fumentsai*, quite a good little fighting craft with a foreigner in charge, for although—thanks to the activity of Admiral Li Chun—pirates were not so rife as they had been, I did not want to take any risks on so distinguished a man who had, moreover, been recommended to my care by the Inspector General. All went off well—whether due to my precautions or to the commendable good sense of the pirates, who usually preferred booty to the dangerous *éclat* of attacking celebrated people, I know not.

There was a good deal of excitement in Canton when the news of the decease not only of the Emperor Kwanghsu but also of the Empress Dowager reached the Viceroy, but a later telegram to him, signed by Prince Ch'ing, Na Tung, and Yüan Shih-kai, did much to reassure public opinion. Later again came a telegram from the Tientsin Viceroy, stating that all was quiet and newspaper rumours unworthy of belief. I had, of course, also received telegrams from Sir Robert Bredon—the Acting Inspector General—and had communicated their contents, also of a reassuring nature, to the Viceroy and the high officials. These

"sidelights" on the situation naturally helped to ease their minds.

Later on I paid an official visit of condolence to the Viceroy, accompanied by the two Deputy Commissioners and the Acting Postal Commissioner. His Excellency evidently appreciated this attention and at the close of the interview asked me to remain behind. When the others had withdrawn, the Viceroy talked in a low and earnest voice about the political situation. He seemed very anxious about possible machinations of Secret Societies, especially the "Ko Ming." He also asked about the "defence preparations" by the foreign Consuls on Shamien. He said someone had wired to the Wai-Wu-Pu about it, and the Pu had inquired. I was able to tell him that, as times were somewhat critical owing to recent events, both foreigners and Chinese could not help feeling anxious, but that nothing more had been done in Shamien than had often been necessary before in similar circumstances.

As a diversion I got him on to Bunding matters, i.e. the proposed new road along the river front of Canton City. I more than hinted that the Bunding Bureau was inefficient, very anti-Customs and dealt straight with nobody, and I explained to him again the damage being done to the foreshore by the erection, under licences from the Bunding Bureau, of numberless small bamboo jetties for the use of the large passenger boats. In order securely to warp these boats, heavy mooring piles had been driven into the bed of the river, and caused a rapid deposit of silt in front of the new bunding. The Customs had protested in vain for more than two years, and I told the Viceroy that unless something could be done, and done soon, to carry out the original scheme of iron jetties on screw pile foundations which would not cause silt, the whole bunding scheme would come to nought.

The Viceroy listened attentively, and eventually

authorized me to order the removal of all the offending jetties, and added that he would instruct the Bureau accordingly. Of course, we both knew that this had been said many times before. The trouble was that as soon as anything practical was undertaken the Guilds, and especially the Steam Launch Guild, would get up in arms and threaten all sorts of dreadful strikes and alarms. Then the Viceroy would be worried, because it was a fact that it is very easy to raise a riot in Canton, and especially in times of tension. So some compromise had to be adopted, and the harm to the river continued.

How easily trouble occurs was demonstrated a few days previously by an incident on board the British river steamer *Fatshan*. A moribund Chinese passenger was shaken by the Portuguese watchmen on board in order to rouse him up to pay his fare. There were about six hundred passengers, and as the man alleged to have been assaulted died soon afterwards, there was immediately a wild disturbance, which the captain, a man of great local experience, pacified by promising that full inquiry should be made on arrival of the steamer at Canton. This was at midnight, the vessel got in at daybreak, and in due course an inquiry was held. The Consular doctor viewed the corpse, and, finding no signs of violence, certified to death from natural causes. Many Chinese doctors came on board, pommelled the corpse all over and pronounced an opposite verdict. The Consul posted armed marines on the vessel, and about 4 p.m. the corpse was solemnly removed in a very expensive coffin provided by the District Magistrate. The marines were withdrawn and the ship left for Hong-Kong. A further inquiry was promised on her return, but when she arrived the second time popular excitement had visibly diminished.

No doubt it never would have arisen, had it not been for the native Press, which unfortunately reported the doings of the Self-Government Society and of all

the other cranks who flourished in Canton. They got at last to believe in their own wonderful yarns, and even induced respectable people to think there must be something in the broadcast accusations indulged in. Such a state of affairs greatly added to the Viceroy's anxieties and increased the difficulty of getting anything—however reasonable—put through promptly. Everything was canvassed in the Press and generally misrepresented! The "Self-Government Society" would have been more correctly named the "Self-Advertising Society." "Hence its screams."

On the 2nd December the Viceroy and all the officials, civil and military, did homage to the new Emperor at the Wan Shou Kung. The whole Consular Body attended, but from some misunderstanding, or possibly from some fear of being misunderstood, were not present at the actual ceremony, but the Commissioner, his two Deputy Commissioners, and the Postal Commissioner did it all in correct Chinese style. We went in mourning clothes, changed our black ties to coloured ones at the Wan Shou Kung, were conducted by the Viceroy's Secretaries to the front of the throne, and made three profound bows (English Court style), and then went in to congratulate the Viceroy. The entire hierarchy went in mourning clothes, changed at the Wan Shou Kung into gala dress, and put on mourning again on leaving the premises. We too changed back into black neckties. Altogether it was a most interesting ceremony—very simply carried out but very dignified. The only jarring note was a *faux pas* by the interpreter of the Portuguese Consul-General, who for some reason or other "rushed in" to interpret the Viceroy's reply to the Consular congratulations. However, one of the attendant Chinese officials waited patiently until the Portuguese gentleman had got through with a sort of "pidgin English" version of the Viceroy's remarks, and then in a very dignified manner and perfect intonation gave the Viceroy's real reply.

The end of the year was marked by a curious episode probably unique in Anglo-Chinese relations. I was informed that a steam vessel named *Taion* had been arrested by order of the Viceroy for being concerned in a collision case in which thirteen lives had been lost. I could not understand the matter at first, as I knew the vessel was under the British flag and had been trading for the last seventeen years in Hong-Kong and Canton waters. So I happened in on the British Consul-General to get the facts. The explanation was on the surface, and both he and the Vice-Consul admitted that they had inadvertently misled the Viceroy and that they in their turn had been misled by the Hong-Kong Harbour Master. They and he had both assumed that the Viceroy's inquiry referred to a steam launch, and they both had assured the Viceroy that there was no such vessel on the British registry. Hence his action, or rather Admiral Li Chun's action, which was taken without reference to the Canton Commissioner.

I immediately wrote in to the Viceroy's Secretary to suggest that Chinese action might be retraced with advantage. Meanwhile a telegram of inquiry as to the case had reached me from the Acting Inspector General. Having prepared the ground with his Secretaries and enlisted both Sir Chen-tung Liang-ch'êng and Wei Han to support the release of the vessel, I went in to see the Viceroy, using the Inspectorate telegram as my excuse for intervening in the matter. The Viceroy received me affably, but was not inclined to release the steamer at that juncture. He said: "I acted on the proof furnished by the British authorities that the *Taion* was not a British vessel." Finally he asked me (a favourite wheeze of his) what I would do in such a case if I were Viceroy.

I replied that I would treat it lightly, and on my own initiative as Viceroy would write to the Consul-General that I had asked him whether the *Taion* was British, and that both he and the Hong-Kong Harbour

Master had said she was not. Furthermore, the Hong-Kong authorities had added that she was probably falsely flying the British flag. Now, they all concurred in saying that she was British. That statement the Commissioner, were he Viceroy, would also accept, only remarking that the British authorities did not always know what was British and what was not, and that in future perhaps he had better ask the Consul *twice* about his own vessels. The Viceroy laughed a good deal at this, but said he had to think about the Canton people, who were indignant that no steps had been taken for months to bring the ship to book for the running down and drowning of which she was accused. I did not contest this point, but remarked that if the Viceroy stuck to the ship he could not well ask the British Consul to punish her, and that, similarly, he could not himself under treaty rules adjudicate against a ship about whose British status there was no longer any doubt.

I was with him for about two hours, and left him balancing the situation. On the way home I saw the British Consul-General, and suggested he should write to the Viceroy and say that as soon as the *Taion* was released a full inquiry would be made into all charges against her. This he did, and, moreover, went to see the dear old man the next day, and obtained the release of the *Taion* under a proper bond for her production whenever wanted for further trial. Thus was nipped in the bud, by the common sense and good faith of all concerned, a matter that might easily have developed into a second *Tatsu Maru* case.

But Canton was seldom tranquil for long, and on the 1st January, 1909, renewed *Fatshan* trouble broke out. The Canton Self-Government Society was dissatisfied with the outcome (acquittal) of the trial of the Portuguese watchman, who the Society chose to consider was responsible for the Chinese passenger's death in the previous case. There was

a mob of several hundred coolies hanging about the wharf and occasionally hooting. The passengers already on board got alarmed and left the ship. The Chinese police turned out promptly and cleared the wharf, and the British Naval authorities put a body of armed bluejackets on board the steamer. I went down to the wharf and sat with the local officials in the guard-house, and also with Captain Lloyd on board the *Fatshan* until 5.15 in the afternoon, when she left for Hong-Kong. It was all very silly and futile, but these incidents, if not promptly dealt with, are very apt to get out of control. The perfervid so-called Chinese patriots—backed by a perfectly irresponsible vernacular Press—would never listen to reason, and responsible officials were hardpressed to know what to do with them. Sometimes I would remark: "H.E. Li Chung-t'ang knew very well what to do with them." Then they would laugh and say: "Oh, but that was different." It was—very different!

About this period there was a shocking holocaust at the Flower Boat Anchorage in the East Creek just outside the city walls. Fire broke out, the ordinary lamp accident, on board one of the boats and spread with frightful rapidity. Thirty of the large double-storied boats were destroyed and their occupants, male and female, either burnt or drowned. The tale of dead was not far short of five hundred. It was rumoured that many scions of the gentry, as well as merchants and officials, were amongst the victims, but naturally great reticence was observed as to these details by the families concerned, no one liking to admit presence on board of such craft.

It was particularly awkward for anybody with official rank, because of the mourning for the late Emperor, a period during which all officials were supposed to put aside any amusements, and especially those involving intercourse with the opposite sex. So strict indeed was the rule that it was accounted a misdemeanour for the spouse of an official to get into

the condition in which a lady who loves her lord delights during these limits.

The great loss of life was due largely to the mistaken action of the Water Police. They had evidently heard of the foreign system of drawing a cordon round a fire, and unfortunately drew so tight a cordon that many who could easily have escaped were caught in the flames. The police actually prevented outside sampans coming to the rescue and saving life, and altogether made a shocking mess of the whole affair. The Viceroy—a strictly living man—was very angry against the people who were using such boats during the national mourning, and instructed the Provincial Treasurer to institute a rigid inquiry into the social habits of the minor officials.

I visited the scene of the catastrophe the next day—the fire was on a Saturday night—and it was sad to see the rows of charred and drowned bodies laid out on the foreshore. They were of all shapes and sizes. Fat old merchants and well-dressed “young bloods” mixed up with the “painted flower-girls” of J. O. P. Bland’s famous ditty. By an unfortunate error in judgment on the part of the Customs night watch the fact of the fire was not reported to his senior officer, as the man thought it was only one of the numerous blazes on the foreshore dwellings which were of frequent occurrence. Had we in the Customs known the facts and been able to get our fire engine on the spot in time, it is not too much to assert that there would have been no such action by the Water Police as has been described and the loss of life would have been much less.

As usual in emergencies the Charitable Guilds dealt promptly with the situation, and arranged for the burial of all the unknown. Curiously enough, the populace, easily excited on other matters, took the whole affair very calmly.

But my sands at Canton were now running out, as I had been granted two years’ leave of absence as

soon as my successor could take over the port. The last Viceregal function I assisted at was on the 7th April, 1909, on the occasion of laying the foundation-stone of the Terminal Station of the Canton-Kowloon Railway at Tai-sha-tan, just outside the East Gate of Canton City. The Governor of Hong-Kong and the Colonial Secretary came up for the ceremony, which was very well staged and came off without a hitch as far as the Chinese were concerned. It struck some of us that the Hong-Kong Governor's speech seemed to insist rather too much (for good taste) on the benefit to China of railway connection with Hong-Kong. His whole attitude reminded me of Sir Robert Hart's anecdote about Wen Hsiang's remark—"That the British invariably gave good advice to China in an unpalatable form"—and almost produced the impression that he was taking advantage of the occasion to let the Viceroy know what he thought of the Canton Government. However, His Excellency Chang seemed not a penny the worse and beamed on the just and unjust alike, as only a man with a swivel eye can. I was close by their two Excellencies most of the time and enjoyed the situation not a little.

I handed over charge of the Canton Customs to my old friend and colleague, J. F. Oisen (now Danish Minister in Peking), on the 8th May, 1909, and left for Hong-Kong on the 11th May. I had paid a farewell visit to the Viceroy on the 10th, and he did me the great honour of coming in person to see me off. All our friends—native and foreign—did the same, and overwhelmed us with kindness and regrets.

CHAPTER XIX

Sir Robert Hart in his London home—Farewell visit to the great I.G.—I am appointed Statistical Secretary in Shanghai—Early pension schemes and what became of them—Revolutionaries at Shanghai—A railway incident—Shanghai International Boy Scouts—Death of Sir Robert Hart—Mr. (now Sir Francis) Aglen appointed to succeed—Memorial statue to Sir Robert Hart—The makers of the Revolution—Wu Ting-fang, Tang Shao-yi and Wên Tsung-yao—The Abdication Edict—Dr. G. E. Morrison and the Revolution—Sun Yat-sen's failure—Chao-chu Wu and the Plea for the recognition of the Chinese Republic—I am transferred to Amoy.

ON ARRIVAL IN LONDON we lost no time in going up to Smedley's at Matlock, but the former doctor (Hunter trained) was no longer there, and we soon decided that the new régime was no use for us, so we returned to London on 25th July, 1909. A long illness followed for my wife, alleviated luckily for us by the fact that our old and trusted friend Dr. Hartigan, formerly of Hong-Kong, was in London and took charge of the case. But she was desperately ill for a long time and prevented from doing many things she and I had planned to do. Our long leave in 1902-4 had been ruined by my sprue troubles, and it was very bitter to us to be again outwitted by a malign fate.

It was therefore with very mixed feelings that I went to call on the Inspector General in his London home. I have a note in my diary about this visit (3rd October, 1909): "Called on Sir Robert and Lady Hart. Met Mrs. Bruce Hart there. I.G. very civil, says he hates his London house and prefers his Peking bungalow. Looks well, but more like a Methodist minister than what he really is."

FAREWELL VISIT TO THE GREAT I.G.

It was very true. He was a most incongruous-looking figure in Lady Hart's drawing-room. Her guests were mostly shallow "smart people," quite incapable of appreciating what lay behind Robert Hart's somewhat unfashionable appearance.

I had previously renewed my old Boxer acquaintance with Li Ching-fang, the Chinese Minister in London. He was the adopted son of the great Marquis, and was always known in England as Lord Li. Being a rich man he had brightened up the surroundings of the Legation in Portland Place, and was well known in Society as a successful and most urbane host.

I paid a farewell visit to Sir Robert and Lady Hart on 5th February, 1911, little realizing that it would be the last time I should see him. He was not, I thought, looking well, and had let his beard and whiskers grow all round his face. He had the listless air of a man who stayed too much indoors, but he still seemed pleased to talk about Service matters. I was quite in ignorance as to my future post in China and told him so. He responded at once in quite his old style, and professed entire irresponsibility for any Service moves. In fact he went further and said he was quite out of touch and hardly knew how the Commissioners were placed by his *locum tenens* in Peking. On this I laid a little trap for him, and said, "Oh, A B C is in Nanking now." In a flash the old man said, "Pardon me, D E F is there." So much for not knowing where his satellites were placed! It was then, and for months afterwards, generally supposed that he was on the eve of resuming duty at Peking. But Fate willed it otherwise.

The 11th February was the birthday anniversary of the hapless Emperor Kwang-hsü. I called at the Legation and saw Lord Li and bade him *au revoir*. He had been a very good friend to me always and I was grateful to him for his invariable kindness. We left Southampton by the Nord-Deutscher Lloyd *Kleist* on 14th February and were glad to find con-

genial people on board. The voyage was uneventful, but the passengers greatly appreciated the consideration of the captain in taking us quite close inshore the whole length of the Riviera. From Hyères he showed us a perfect panorama of the French and Italian coast. Cannes, Nice, Monaco, and Monte Carlo and onwards to San Remo, the whole bathed in glorious sunlight. We decided to like San Remo best of all, because of its dark background of pine-clad hills and snow-capped mountains beyond. I had been often enough through the Mediterranean before, but generally aboard steamers far out at sea. We had two charming rests at Genoa and Naples and did the sights by day and night of both places to our satisfaction. In due course we arrived at Hong-Kong, leaving again the next morning, and arrived at our destination, Shanghai, late at night on 26th March.

Next day I heard for the first time, and from the Shanghai Commissioner, of my appointment as Statistical Secretary, in charge of the Inspectorate General, Shanghai. My official appointment from Peking came two days later over the signature of F. A. Aglen, Officiating Inspector General of Customs.

It was a new departure for me, involving as it did much unfamiliar work. The Statistical Secretary, or Stat. Sec. as he was called for short, had quite a varied lot of duties. Under his control was the printing office, where all the "yellow books," i.e. annual and quarterly statistics, annual *Trade Reports*, *Decennial Trade Reports*, and many other special pamphlets on a great number of subjects connected with the trade of China, were printed.

Besides the office staff of the Inspectorate there were numerous technical employees, proof readers, printers and mechanics—the whole housed in a suburb of Shanghai in a group of houses named Hart Road. It was all quite new, and it appeared to me that "somebody had blundered" in the selection of the site, which was four and half miles from the river front

at Shanghai and therefore very inconvenient for the large amount of heavy transport involved in the ordinary transactions of the Department. The ground was also very swampy and intersected by vilely smelling creeks. However, there it was and had to be put up with. Still, like the parrot, one had one's thoughts!

The Statistical Secretary had little leisure for grousing even if he had been so inclined, and I soon became absorbed in all that came my way. The Customs Service was seething with discontent during the closing years of Sir Robert Hart's administration, but it was realized that during his lifetime very little in the way of much-needed reforms could be expected. My own view had always been that there was only one way out of the *impasse*, and that was to advocate steadfastly and continuously the advisability of providing some sort of a pension for the foreign employees, such pension to carry with it obligatory retirement from the active list. To this end I had worked for several years and had also assisted the late Mr. J. D. Campbell in the preparation of his plans for Service retirement. I remember how the latter's very elaborate and carefully-worked-out memorandum—backed, moreover, by first-class actuarial opinion—was shelved by the great I.G. with the remark that it was something for his successor to deal with. But, nevertheless, some of us worked on, but during the interim régime between Sir Robert Hart's leave of absence and death—1908–11—though schemes were submitted nothing was done.

Men went on suffering and dying for the next ten years, until the present plan came into force (1921).

Although I and some Seniors who were fortunate enough to survive until its advent benefited much more than could have been anticipated, I have always regretted that it did not contain the "covenant" clause that was in my scheme, binding the Chinese Government—as distinguished from the Inspector General

—to continue to administer the scheme until the last foreign employee engaged under it was paid in full and retired.

The *imperium in imperio* is all very well, but can never be so good as direct contact with the national Government under international guarantees.

Inter alia, the covenant would generally have improved the status of Customs employees by making them *direct* employees of the Chinese Government and securing for them lifelong employment during good behaviour in place of discharge at three months' notice—or with three months' pay without cause assigned.

Meanwhile the Chinese Revolution was coming to a head, although the revolutionaries were termed rebels and Imperial armies were engaged against them. On 3rd November, 1911, Shanghai City was quietly occupied by the revolutionists, but an attack made on the Arsenal had failed. They also threatened the Nanking railway station, but found it already in the occupation of the Shanghai Municipal Police, backed up by the Shanghai International Volunteers. People not travelling by train were refused entrance at one end of the station yard. I noticed a picket of the German company of the Volunteers, while a few yards off was a "rebel" picket. A little rat-like Chinese officer was very eagerly examining the rebel rifles—opening breeches, etc.—but I could spot no one else in authority. I had quite an amicable talk with the picket in the colloquial. It was a curious situation. A spark might have started a "very large bobbery," as a Maloo shopkeeper remarked at the time. In fact it very nearly did so turn out and would have meant grief for the foreign picket, whose rifles were unloaded, while the Chinese picket with loaded rifles were only a few yards away. Most providentially—and thoroughly *à la Chinoise*—the officer in command of the revolutionary side was a Chinese contractor turned revolutionary, while the foreign picket was officered by the Engineer-in-Chief of the Customs.

DEATH OF SIR ROBERT HART

Like the men of Dumdrudge immortalized by Carlyle, these two had had many satisfactory dealings together in civil life, and it seemed—especially from the contractor's point of view—highly improper that peace between them should be broken. Neither was it, but all the same it was a near squeak.

Amongst my other avocations I had become Chairman of the Council of the Shanghai Boy Scouts. These were distinct from the local Baden-Powell Scouts open to boys of British parentage only, while we drew a wide net for our Scouts and got them of all nationalities—American, British, Danish, German, Swedish—in fact most of the many nations in Shanghai were represented, the whole forming a body unique in Scout organization. We soon had more than a hundred boys on our hands, and were fortunate enough to attract the right sort of masters and leaders. We had quite a large garden at the Stat. Sec.'s house and were always pleased to see the Scouts there. Procedure opened with outdoor "stunts," followed by tea with sausage rolls, and a musical march past to the tune of "John Brown's Body," my wife at the piano. First we marched in single file round the table, then upstairs and all over the house, then round the garden and out into the street till the echoes of "John Brown" were lost in the gathering mist.

The news of Sir Robert Hart's death reached Shanghai on the 21st September, 1911—the day after he had died at Marlow in Buckinghamshire—and soon afterwards the question of a Service memorial to him was being generally discussed. It was thought that the Shanghai Customs should take the first step, so on 26th October the Shanghai Commissioner, Mr. H. F. Merrill, and I in my capacity as local representative of the Inspectorate General, addressed a joint letter to the Service, asking for suggestions, etc. The response was not overwhelmingly enthusiastic—in fact as time went on it looked doubtful if anything could be accomplished at all commensurate. Luckily,

however, the Shanghai Municipal Council weighed in with quite a handsome sum, so that in one way or another we collected about Taels 15,000. Meanwhile it had been decided that the memorial should be in the form of a statue. The work was entrusted to Mr. Henry Pegram, A.R.A., and eventually put into position on the Shanghai Bund not far from the Custom House. The figure, standing in a familiar pose, is in bronze 9 ft. high on an 8-ft. granite pedestal with bronze panels commemorating his achievement in Postal, Lighthouse and other matters outside his life work in the Customs. When completed and exhibited it commended itself generally to the public taste, and Merrill and I were glad we had stood out four square for a statue against the many other suggestions which had been put forward with more or less degree of warmth through the long period of discussion before a final decision was arrived at. Our correspondence with the Service—past and present—was of a nature “to give furiously to think.” One retired Senior wrote: “I do not respect the man or admire his management of the Service.” My own view—shared in I believe by most of the Committee—was that Sir Robert Hart, on his *public form*, deserved a statue, but I am afraid that most of us, on oath, would have had—as a result of actual knowledge—to endorse the opinion above quoted. It is sad to record that after forty-eight years of unrivalled opportunity Robert Hart left so little of what was pleasant to dwell on to the Service he had created.

During the latter part of the year I had seen a good deal of Wu Ting-fang, who with Tang Shao-yi was engaged in conferences with the Imperial delegates. I had a long talk with Wu on Christmas Day. He was looking very well and in excellent spirits. He said he hoped agreement was not far off. He had seen Dr. Morrison just before he left for Peking the previous day, and put before him the view that the question was not between the Manchus and the

Chinese people, but between the Manchus and who should govern China. The Chinese were determined to have a *Chinese* Government, whether republican or limited monarchy was immaterial, but the Manchu element must go. A curious sidelight came my way a few days later. The revolutionaries were doing some foreign recruiting and according to my informant ex-policemen and general scallawags were getting positions "à trois cent dollar par mois." These brave men got themselves up in a uniform of sorts and dined with splendour at the Hôtel des Colonies, much to the disgust of all decent people. The middle Yangtsze district was much disturbed, and there was an anti-German bias spreading amongst the revolutionaries due to their belief that ex-German officers were actively helping the Imperialists in the field. They were convinced they had been shelled out of Hanyang in November by German-directed fire. Consequently the German newly appointed Commissioner of Customs at Ichang could not take charge owing to revolutionary threats.

The year closed, as far as I was concerned, with a visit to the Shanghai Boy Scouts in camp—a most enjoyable little outing. During the year we had formed a Cercle d'Escrime at the French Lawn Tennis Club, and had a good many quite good fencers recruited mainly from the Consular Body. We were fortunate in finding a very efficient Professor, Monsieur Denis, skilled in all the arms, and I spent many happy hours there sword in hand. I also taught some of the elder Boy Scouts to handle foil and sabre with good results.

The most salient feature of the year 1912 was the abdication of the Emperor Hsüan-tung in favour of the new republic. The Abdication Edict transferred the sovereignty, hitherto vested in the Emperor alone, to the people. It legalized the Republic in the strongest possible way, i.e. by recognition of the new Government by the then Sovereign Power. But

unfortunately it failed to secure for the new Republic the instant recognition by the Treaty Powers which would have done so much to consolidate its position *vis-à-vis* of the Chinese people. One need not stress the point, the history of the Republic from that time onwards being sufficiently illuminating.

As already mentioned, I was thrown a good deal into fellowship with Wu Ting-fang during the inception period of the Chinese Republic. At that time the "Powers" in Peking had from some reason or other never seemed to take Wu very seriously. Possibly he was himself somewhat to blame, for he dearly loved to indulge in jokes and sallies seldom permitted to serious politicians. But at that period he was serious enough. Both he and his fellow-worker Wen Tsung-yao and the other "reformers" were in no mood for trifling with the issues they had raised, and knew very well that *untergang* of the worst sort awaited them should they fail to "make good" in their self-chosen rôle of saviours of the State. Their methods were interesting and typical, being largely telegraphic. The head of the Chinese Telegraph Administration was either willing or submissive, and very soon help and sympathy for the new Republic were being asked for over the wires from men of light and leading all over the world, especially in the U.S.A. Wu had not been twice at Washington for nothing and knew exactly how to tickle the great men of America in the right place, and soon the most ancient people, but youngest of Republics, was on excellent terms with folks over there. "Brothers, we greet you," etc., etc.—winged words that did more to encourage the progressives and discourage the reactionaries than all the previous fighting put together. Still, no one thought the Republic had come to stay. Even so astute an observer of things Chinese as the late Dr. Morrison was inclined to look upon Wu as a visionary and on his Republic as a vain dream. He visited Shanghai in 1911 and I took him for a drive through the

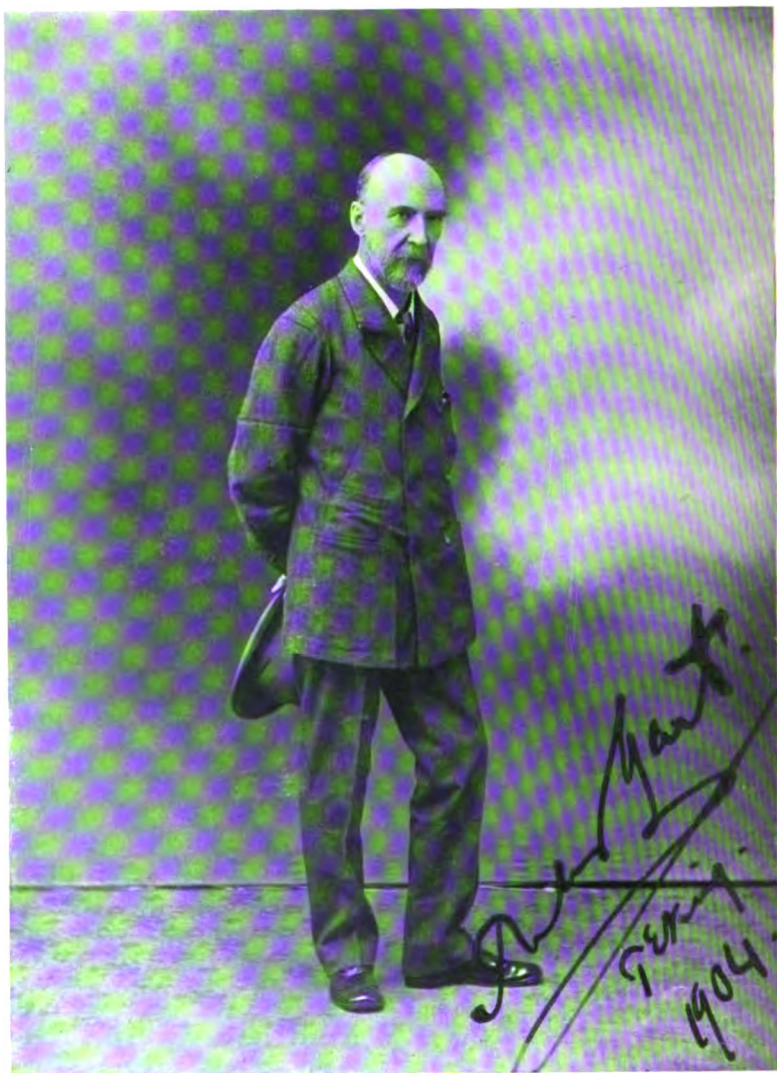
Chinese part of the foreign settlement ; republican flags everywhere, but the poor old dragon nowhere. Morrison was hard to convince and repeated that Wu was a visionary. I addressed him at last in the Socratic manner : " Then a visionary, in your view, makes money ? " Morrison laughed and said, " No " ! " Well," I said, " Friend Wu is a self-made man and rich." No reply from Morrison, but I could see he was rearranging some preconceived notions in his own mind, all to bear fruit later on when, as adviser to the President of the Chinese Republic, he became a staunch supporter of the new order. In discussing its subsequent failure, the future historian will put things in the right perspective. It will then appear that in 1898—that *annus mirabilis* in China—the Foreign Ministers at the Court of the Emperor Kwang-hsü were very apprehensive of the new advisers, " Kang yü wei " and his martyred companions of that unhappy youth, and yet those men counselled nothing that was not good : No matter, Great is the God Reaction. A grand opportunity was let to slip, while people often congratulated themselves on their wisdom and foresight even up to the very threshold of the Boxer rising two years later.

Of that event Sir Robert Hart remarked, " We cannot say we had no warning," and yet with its warnings and lessons fresh in their memories it will have to be recorded that the Foreign Ministers and Sir Robert Hart continued to support the murderous despotism of the Empress Dowager and acquiesced in her return to Peking. White women went to her Court and affected to think that after all she must be all right if only because of her amiability and ever-ready presents. It was assuredly not the fault of Wu and his associates that the new Republic turned out differently than was expected. Sun Yat-sen must bear a large amount of responsibility. When invited to China in a most chivalrous spirit by Wu and the reformers to become First President of the Chinese

Republic he proved to be anything but the man of the hour. Wu was loyal to him to the end, but was never mistaken as to the man himself. I remember on one occasion he said, "Sun is a good man, but he does not know how to govern"—an opinion amply justified by the subsequent career of the "distinguished exile" as the newspapers called him in those days. It was in April 1912 that Wu's brilliant son, Chao-chu Wu, published his famous pamphlet, *A plea for the recognition of the Chinese Republic*. His legal training in England, where he graduated as LL.B. in 1911, had well fitted him for the task. In it he very rightly declined to argue with the persons who dubbed his distinguished father "a visionary dreamer." Neither had he much use for those who doubted the capacity of the Chinese people to establish and maintain the form of government of their choice. He knew that, despite the autocratic exterior of the Imperial régime, democratic characteristics lay at the bottom of Chinese political and social institutions, and he was willing to stake all on the inborn instincts of his fellow-countrymen. The elder Wu has gone to his rest, and few there be inclined to dim his fame. "Visionary and Dreamer!"—he was neither the one nor the other. Only a man who loved his country, knew of better things and strove to get them for it.

I do not propose to follow farther the fortunes of my friends in the Chinese Republic. The second President, Yüan Shih-k'ai, had grit and *did know how to govern*, but, as subsequent events showed, he was a mighty queer sort of a republican!

I was in full flood of activities of all sorts in the Statistical Department at Shanghai, when to my surprise it was intimated to me that I was shortly to be given a port. This turned out to be Amoy—one of the five ports originally opened to Foreign Trade in China.



SIR ROBERT HART, BART., G.C.M.G., LL.D.,
Inspector General of Chinese Customs and Ports.

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CHAPTER XX

A pen portrait of Sir Robert Hart—the "great I.G."

HOW SUM UP the character of Robert Hart? Complicated and many-sided, it is difficult to know where to begin.

Take the Freudian division of temperaments—thought, sensation, intuition, and feeling, with their introverts and extraverts.

These all sound well, but help us not one iota in unravelling the idiosyncrasies of the great I.G. as displayed to his unhappy groundlings. It mattered not to him what kind of introvert or extravert they were, as he was an expert in serving out the exact sort of soup to meet each and all varieties.

Approach him any way you will, it seems wellnigh impossible to "get him." The first thing one seems certain of is that he was a many-sided man, with all his many sides firmly knit together by a tenacious will.

Outwardly, he was a small man, with a slender, almost boyish figure. The upper part of his face good, even almost handsome, with a broad, intellectual forehead, a well-shaped nose, fairly evenly marked eyebrows over a pair of wonderfully expressive, because changeable, eyes. His mouth and chin were less pleasing, and, on the whole, at first sight he appeared insignificant-looking.

His voice was curious, rather guttural, with the power to speak in several tones and accents—at least so it appeared to me. He could almost purr over women and children; talked quietly as a general rule, but always with reserve; and, when resolved to do

so, could bark at any unfortunate who had caused him annoyance. Possibly his much talking in Chinese, often under more or less dramatic conditions, had effected his natural voice and accent, because oddly enough he would at times speak English with a marked Chinese accent, just as his Chinese colloquial invariably betrayed his foreign, and even Hibernian, origin.

But for all that his knowledge of the language and people—especially of the governing class—was uncanny. Yet he was never hypnotized by the medium he worked in—the common fate of too many students of things Chinese. Physically, his outstanding feature was a pair of very small but compact and firm hands, and his handshake invariably ended in a little—apparently unconscious—pushing away of the opposing hand.

His manners were unequal, sometimes charming and fascinating, at others stiff, ungracious, and impervious. There was a certain social shyness in his make-up that was puzzling in a man of his well-assured position.

In a word, to use one of his favourite phrases, he was not a polished man of the world, and was evidently aware of the fact. This made him apt to resent social graces in other people, especially in the British youths in his employment. There is no doubt that socially he got on far better with women than with his own sex, but all the same he had the masculine trait of not thinking much of the female intellect. Highbrows had no attraction for him; he liked his women friends to be young and pretty—of the sort that could be impressed and say, “Oh, Sir Robert!” at the right moment; but he never wanted them to be capable of returning the ball over the net.

For years *favorita* succeeded *favorita*, but in spite of tittle-tattle and even smothered scandal, no woman ever really got hold of Robert Hart, and if any fair dame began cantripping as “Apame” she was speedily got rid of in the mildest and pleasantest way. She ceased to please from the moment she

presumed on her attractions. Many instances could be given, but one, selected haphazard, will suffice to illustrate his methods.

A pretty, and also rather clever, lady succeeded to the throne of the platonic Sultana, and for a time seemed to have achieved (what no predecessor had accomplished) a certain influence over Sir Robert. She thought she had got him, the public thought she had got him, and her husband thought so too, and even one day said as much on the house-tops. No one ever knew, or ever will know, how all this reached the great man's ear : but it did, and she fell like Lucifer, "never to rise again." Her husband was transferred to a tolerable port—neither very good nor very bad : and Madame had to "pay, pack, and follow."

No one in the Service jeered over her fall, because even ex-favourites from the seclusion of their eternal exile still had influence enough to wreck other men and women.

I happened to meet this particular fair one just after the (to her) sudden and utterly unexpected *dénouement*. Metaphorically speaking, her wounds were still bleeding, but I can register my respectful admiration of the courage with which she hid them.

As a rule his intuition was unfailing, and he had the gift of grasping a whole situation almost before the explanation was finished. Senior Commissioners, with a sense of their own dignity and importance, would "lay a matter before him for consideration." Sometimes he would consider it and sometimes not ; but if he did consider and answer, there was generally not much left of the original argument. I am afraid, too, he was sometimes moved by a desire to *embêter* those who had served him long and faithfully. For instance, he would affect to be intensely struck by some "wild-cat" scheme "of a better way of doing things" propounded by some Junior anxious to hoist his number by reflecting on his Seniors. Robert Hart would sympathetically embody the idea—especially

if it were *prima facie* unfeasible—in a long despatch to the Commissioner concerned. He would be directed to look into the matter and report—all written very gravely and with the air that the I.G. was surprised and even grieved to hear about it.

After wearisome explanation and much local friction the silly young critic would be disposed of, and the I.G., if he took any notice at all, would touch airily on the matter in a private letter, or say to the exasperated Senior: "What a man you are—to take a steam-hammer to crush a mosquito!"

All the same, the Junior often got hoist with his own petard.

Probably this sort of thing relieved the official monotony of the Chief's dealings with his staff, but it certainly served no other purpose.

Some people—vaguely cognizant of such incidents and judging them only on the surface—were apt to think and say that Robert Hart was a bad judge of men. Here they were mistaken. He was an excellent judge of men, but his native perversity intervened and he was always looking out for individuals endowed with qualities that psychologically can never run together. One bitter critic said: "He likes a clever, cringing cad," and it is a strange and perhaps sinister fact that he seemed to have a curious instinctive shrinking from—almost a fear of—a man of high character and honourable traditions. An ordinary man may be judged by the companions he selects (as far as he can), but in the case of a prominent personality it is perhaps permissible to take his favourites into consideration.

Robert's Hart's tastes were diverse, but it must be recorded to his credit that he was no snob. Titles, money, celebrity produced very little effect on him. He was no respecter of persons, and little concerned with accidental trappings. He also seemed to be remarkably free from religious, political, or national prejudices—due, no doubt, to the unique

position he occupied and his paradoxical experience of life ; paradoxical in that it was very limited and at the same time extremely varied. He lived in his own house in Peking as Inspector General for about forty-five years—1863–1908—with only two trips home, and, but for his genius and intuition, might have been isolated—fossilized.

These qualities had an immense range in the cosmopolitan and international atmosphere of Peking. In employing samples of "all people that on earth do dwell" he came into relations with all countries. Crowned heads approached him on behalf of Court protégés, while the "best" people, with spare sons and no spare cash, often begged for nominations. His patronage was enormous and intensely personal, and brought him into close contact with human nature the whole world over. On his foreign side he had to deal with all these conflicting currents, while as a Chinese official of almost the highest rank, he had to "transmute and translate" between the East and the West.

Talk of alchemy ! He had to work miracles in his spiritual laboratory, dealing with problems small and great, amidst ever-present diversities of language, exchange, prejudice, knowledge, and ignorance, until one could almost visualize him as a conjurer surrounded by ever-watchful critics ready to pounce on his apparatus and expose his methods. It takes some imagination to understand his position, his difficulties and his triumphs. In a different way, of course, and to a different degree, he was undoubtedly a Napoleon, in that what he set out to do and wanted to do, he did, or speedily found it impossible and dropped it ; but, metaphorically speaking, he never undertook Moscow or faced Waterloo.

I mean no disrespect to his memory when I sometimes think of him as that super-pirate Captain Flint of *Treasure Island* renown. He certainly managed to put a wholesome fear into average minds, and it

was equally true that when lesser spirits tried to conjure with his voice it was a case of "Dead or alive, nobody minds Ben Gunn." But they did mind Captain Flint or suffered for it.

It was, of course, a prime necessity to keep up discipline in the heterogeneous ranks of the Customs *personnel*, recruited from every race and every class, and there is no doubt that Robert Hart kept himself up and kept others down all through his long career.

Sometimes his methods were cruel, generally they were unjust, but the end was achieved—"J'y suis, j'y reste."

Luck, too, was generally on his side, but he never hesitated to help his luck when necessary. He dropped the Consular Service at the psychological moment, and got in with Horatio Nelson Lay, and when Lay's too ambitious programme—for which Peking was not prepared—led to his disappearance, Robert Hart, aged twenty-six, nipped in and took hold: a discreet, provincial hold, be it noted, but one by which inch by inch he at last scaled the great walls of the capital and became the trusted Counsellor of the Imperial House.

Even then, and throughout his whole career, he never laid claims to anything. In this his unimpressive presence helped, and he had a knack of disarming hostility and suspicion by an air of simplicity. In later years it appeared to amuse him to suggest that old age was beginning to dim his faculties, and he was especially fond of doing this in interviews with enterprising journalists, who thereupon would proclaim to the world that the great I.G. was no longer the man he was, and indeed was fast breaking up: only to wake up later to the fact that the "old man" had been pulling their leg and was as much on deck as ever. For his own personal character the ordeal of the Peking siege was another wonderful piece of luck. It is impossible to say how the impression got abroad that he was a physical coward, but the surprise of the siege was the marvellous calm and

uncomplaining courage of Sir Robert Hart. To this all chroniclers bear witness.

For him it was a hideous experience. He had lived in a groove, and liked living in a groove, and for many years had rarely slept away from home.

His privacy—which he loved—was broken into, and the routine of past years ruthlessly and suddenly upset ; yet he took it all with philosophic patience and insisted on sharing the common lot in matters of board and lodging. When he emerged—after wangling the site of his old house from a foreign interloper—he reproduced the structure, line upon line, on the old foundation, and *more suo* went back to his old habits and methods.

People who were inclined to trade on the idea that the I.G. had been softened by his sorrows and that “his afflictions had been blessed to him” were speedily undeceived. He resumed duty as Inspector General, and began again just where he had left off.

Robert Hart’s real opinions remain a mystery, for he has nowhere recorded them, and no one has as yet arisen to explain him to his own and future generations. Possibly his “dere Diry,” which in its entirety was saved from the total destruction of all his other records, may contain his thoughts on the men and matters he dealt with, but until it is given to the world, the world must remain in ignorance of the real Robert Hart.

Those who knew him best—and this is saying very little because no one really knew him—are very much in his own position when he said, “The more I know of China the less I seem to know.”

He was quite communicative on the surface, and never sent anybody empty away ; but when they shook out the basket there was precious little in it of the information or opinions they had come to seek.

He was, perhaps, most happy in his talk with people not in his own rank of life, and often showed queer streaks of sympathy and insight.

A young piano-tuner of my acquaintance, who was

much upset by family troubles, visited Peking and tuned the I.G.'s piano. Sir Robert noticed at once the boy's worried look, found out what was wrong, and gave him a lot of good advice. "I told him 'ow it was at 'ome," said the youth, repeating the story, "and 'ow I 'ad a mind to chuck tuning and go to sea, or something, and 'e says to me: 'Don't you do nothing like that. Just let things stop as they are, and it will come right.' And I did—and it has."

He could also, on occasion, write admirable letters of advice to foolish young women. One of these I saw, and also saw the disastrous result of the advice not being taken.

A sense of humour ranks high nowadays in a man's make-up. Robert Hart was unreliable in this respect—by which I mean his sense of humour was not constant, nor was it kind. He affected a sort of rather banal social joking, especially with women—but I should not claim for him that he was gifted with a humorous outlook on life, and he seemed to forget the prosperity that lies in the ear of the hearer.

I remember at a ceremonious dinner at his house the conversation was on investments. He looked over my way and said: "And pray, how do you invest your money?" No doubt, I should have smiled and said something different, but I was smarting under deferred promotion and many transfers, and even a worm will turn when trodden upon, so I blurted out: "In boots and shoes for my family, Sir Robert." A roar of laughter followed, for the size of my small, large family was well known, but the great man was not amused. His mouth turned down ominously, and promotion came to me afterwards even slower than before.

There is a story, too, of Juniors in the "Nan-Yüan" or Students' Mess in Peking, who, being greatly oppressed by the Senior in charge, took their grievance personally to the I.G. on some theory of a man-to-man talk. The I.G. listened and was at first indulgent, but ultimately became annoyed and

gave a hint that the deputation had exhausted the time limit. Unfortunately the spokesman interrupted the "dismissal sentences" by saying their case had not been fully heard, which was unjust. As a red rag to a bull, as holy water to Satan was the word "justice" to Robert Hart. He turned on the unhappy lad, and said slowly and in sinister tones : " You will go to — " naming a port of uncomfortable reputation, " and have plenty of time there to reflect on this occurrence." It was rather elliptical and pointless at the moment, but that young man expiated his boyish folly for over twenty years, never recovered his lost place in the I.G.'s favour, and had to wait for adequate promotion and recognition until the great man had passed away.

He was Irish to a limited extent, but not to the degree of making bulls, though he could write as follows to one of his Senior Commissioners : " Either Mr. Black or Mr. White will be transferred in the next month—certainly one, probably both." Here the joke was to worry the Commissioner, upset the office, unsettle both Mr. Black and Mr. White and their wives, and keep the whole staff in a ferment until it became apparent that actually no one would be moved. But, of course, one never knew for certain whether it was smoke only or fire.

Transfer or threatened transfer was his favourite weapon of offence, and a very deadly one too in the conditions of travel and housing then prevailing in the smaller ports. As he was a declared enemy of athletics, or games of a like tendency, and never indulged in any manly sport, he had no points of unofficial contact with his fellow-men, and he had no liking for club life. He was fond of music and trifled with the violin, and occasionally took part in amateur theatricals.

It is said that he was quite a good actor. I never saw him behind the footlights, but on " known form " can quite conceive that he had the knack of producing any impression he set his mind to.

Concerning his moral code and his religious faith one can but guess. Possibly he had Nietzschean views of "beyond good and evil," and having perfect self-control was not afraid of ventures upon thin ice. But he was almost certainly a strong believer in his Creator and a supporter of religion, at least outwardly. He was a generous giver to good works, and more than generous to his family. His own tastes were very simple, but he liked nice clothes and went to an expensive tailor. He bought books freely, and by snatches kept up to date even with modern novels. He summed up his own life as "happy, because busy," and there can be no doubt that he liked his work best of all. No one worked harder or stuck to his job more persistently than he. Love of Power was a strong motive, but he was ever mindful of the responsibility he bore towards the Service he had created: and he had a curious and devastating habit of mapping out people's Service careers for them. I remember he said to one man almost pathetically: "You are the only man for whose Service future I cannot arrange."

Heaven only knows what might have happened to the man, but he solved the I.G.'s problem by pre-deceasing him. Still, it illustrates the point that he did care about what became of us all, only resented anybody getting out of line—his line. Certain it is that he kept all real authority in his own hands. His staff were ciphers—one Chief Secretary succeeded another—men came and went—but no one was ever indispensable to that small, slender, ironclad autocrat. But, although not given to intimacies or comradeship, he had a curious strain of almost sentimental fidelity to the friends of his youth, the people "who knew him when"—as the Americans say. He showered benefits on them through their children, whom he took into the Service and pushed on regardless of justice to others.

One gathered the idea that in his busy life he had a sort of inward refuge in a dreamland, partly of his youth, partly of his imagination. In body he was

long separated from his wife and children, but they were always vividly in his mind. He was fond of his brother Jem, a very lovable and sympathetic person, and was more at ease with him than with anybody else : but always seemed elusive even to the ties of blood.

One supreme desire was granted to him. He died as he had lived, Inspector General. He was "on leave" when death overtook him, and had always felt he could go back and resume duty whenever he wanted to. No one could—at least I cannot—think of him as "giving up," or being "bowled" or "caught." When the innings was declared closed, he "carried out his bat." And the Service he left behind, the older members, even those who had no cause to love him, felt that something irreplaceable had gone out of their lives.

He seems, too, to have written "Finis" to more than his own career, for the Chinese Empire passed with him, and the Dragon Flag that had flown from Customs flagstaffs at all ports and places under his control flew there no longer. The Five-Nation flag of the Republic waved over a disintegrated, because "reformed," China, leaving the old banner to veil the majestic shades of the past. The old Empress Dowager, the great Viceroys and Ministers, the martyred Emperor Kwang-hsü and the enigmatic buttress of them all, Sir Robert Hart : in life they were much together, but in death they lie widely apart. They rest in high honour in their tremendous coffins in their native land—he in an English country churchyard, far from everything he worked for and cared for, and from all who knew him in his work. It seems somehow inappropriate.

But his effigy stands on the Shanghai Bund not far from where he first landed at the dawn of his great career, and where he left for ever the China he loved and served so well. This may be the end, and yet, perhaps, at the Grand Assize we may meet again—the great I.G. and his Service—for the Judgement of God on us all !

CHAPTER XXI

I take charge at Amoy—Recollections of Sir Robert Bredon—Revisit Swatow—Clan fights at Amoy—Visit of Admiral von Spee—We entertain the Emden at a garden party—I protest against iconoclasm in the name of progress—Sir Charles Eliot visits Amoy—Salt and soldiers—An awkward situation—Japanese Fleet always in evidence—Opium suppression—I am transferred to Foochow.

WE TRAVELLED DOWN to Amoy, *via* Hong-Kong, in the French Mail steamer *Paul Lécat*, a very beautiful and well-equipped ship, but rather happy-go-lucky in the *cuisine* and stewards' department. Still, everybody on board was friendly and nice, and as we slipped down South climatic conditions improved almost hourly. In due course we made Hong-Kong, and I was soon discussing the "Customs situation" with my old friend and colleague, the Kowloon Commissioner. He had served under Sir Robert Bredon at the Shanghai Office of the Inspectorate General provisionally opened there after the Boxer troubles, and we naturally discussed him and his self-imposed retirement. He was a most amiable, kindly Chief and one who believed in working with, and not above, his staff. I corresponded with him for years in his Deputy Inspector General and Acting Inspector General days, and never had a line from him breathing ought but unfailing courtesy, even in cases where he did not agree.

His social popularity in Peking was undoubted, and as chairman of the Peking Club he was a striking figure at local functions, while ever a genial host in his own home. He was courteous and forgiving even to his

enemies—people who abused him freely, but who never, so far as I could ascertain, were able to quote chapter and verse in support of their railings. It was his virtues rather than any fault that led to his withdrawal from the post of Acting Inspector General, and his retirement was certainly not due to any wish of the Government he had served since 1873. I remember a very highly placed Chinese official saying to me at the time: "Why did he resign? When he did so, of course, we could do nothing to keep him in office." As a matter of fact, they did try to keep him in office in another capacity, but that led to complications, and, as he told me himself, he finally resigned as he did not wish to be an embarrassment either to the Chinese or the British Government. He died some years afterwards in his house at Peking, where he had elected to make his home: a kind-hearted Irish gentleman.

On the way up the coast from Hong-Kong we called in at Swatow—the port in which I had commenced my Customs life in 1874—and I stood once again in the room I occupied then, and where I sweated and sweltered for five long years struggling with the Chinese language under wellnigh impossible conditions. I walked along the old road as far as Dierk's house, now the German Consulate. The place had developed, even as its builder foretold, into a beautiful house and grounds. A new European quarter had sprung up where formerly all was beach and sand-dunes.

Next morning we were in Amoy, and I took over charge on the 28th November, 1912. We lived at Beach House, the Commissioner's residence, on the Island of Kulangsu. The office and business quarter were on the Amoy side—a disadvantage for me with my sprue tendencies, as it necessitated a long daily exposure to the sun going to and fro.

Amoy was, of course, a big contrast after the busy life—both in work and play—one lived in Shanghai, but towards the end of the year we were enlivened

by several "clan fights." These domestic affairs were generally settled out of sight as far as foreigners were concerned, but on this occasion the foreign anchorage had been chosen as the battle-ground. Bullets flew about freely, a window in the harbour master's house was shattered, and one shot hit a British steamer, without, however, doing any harm. This brought me in touch with the local military official—a fine old Hunan warrior. His heart was in the right place, but unfortunately he had only a small force at his disposal—a fact well known to the unruly tribes on his border.

Another excitement was a British steamer on fire in the lower harbour. Our old fire pump did wonders under the efficient direction of the harbour master. As usual, when well and sympathetically led, trained Chinese are hard to beat. The control of the Native Customs was still in an unsettled state, and I had to take a firm line to secure that the small measure of Customs authority should not be infringed upon. Amoy was actually managed by deputies of the big officials in Foochow. However, we soon got to know and understand one another, and resolved to work together for the "good of China." This was always my last argument and invariably won through, it being manifestly impossible for any of us to profess any other creed!

Amoy possessed a Municipal Council and a small Police Force, with a foreign Superintendent and Sikh and Chinese policemen. I was asked to join the Council, but declined on the score of pressure of other work. Later on an old resident told me I was quite right not to thrust my head into the hornets' nest of Municipal affairs. I did not know at the time it was quite as bad as that, but subsequent events proved he was not far wrong.

Among local celebrities was a German doctor, whose wife had four children from one conception. Three died and one—a boy—survived. Two of the children were born at six months, and the other two

at full time. I wonder if this is a record? He was quite a nice man, but overshadowed, so to speak, by his wife's performance.

About New Year the port was visited by the German cruisers *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst*. Each had twenty-seven officers and a crew of nearly eight hundred—typical fighting ships. The latter was the flagship of Admiral Graf von Spee, who afterwards went to his death off the Falklands. His officers—especially the younger ones—were singularly like English Naval men. Most of them spoke fluent English, and they were all very popular on shore. The Admiral always sent his band to the various little functions given in his honour, and there was a great wailing and tribulation when the ships left after a brief stay. Whether because of guile or not, the German Navy always laid itself out to get on well with the British China Squadron and English-speaking people at the various ports.

The *Emden* visited Amoy a little later on, but her Commander was not the redoubtable Captain Muller of Great War achievements amongst British shipping. She was then under the command of Captain von Restorff. We gave an afternoon reception to them at Beach House. It went off very pleasantly, as the large house and beautiful grounds were well adapted for the purpose. The *Emden* band was a host in itself, and I saw to it that there was plenty of "lager-bier," with sausages, cigars and cake to keep up the high standard of the opening bars. Little did we dream that their drums and trumpets would celebrate the capture and sinking of many a gallant British merchantman, and themselves go up in fire and smoke at the hands of the Australian avenger. On the contrary, a few days afterwards the whole community, of possibly eight or ten different nationalities, was at the German Consulate to celebrate the Kaiser's *Geburstag*. The *Emden* fired a salute, the band played "Heil Dir," and we all drank to the long life

of the *Vaterland*. Later in the evening the *Emden* put on a capital variety show at the Club Theatre, after which we danced till 3 a.m. Quite a League of Nations *in petto*.

The suppression of native opium had been decreed by the rulers of the Chinese Republic, but the carrying out of their orders in the provinces was not all plain sailing. Neither was it easy to deal—except at the cost of unwarrantable interference with personal liberty—with the many highly respectable opium-smokers all round us. I have always been anti-prohibition, however seemingly good the purpose in view might be, and had little sympathy with such arbitrary methods as hacking up poppy crops or domiciliary visits in private houses. I attended as a matter of duty several “anti-opium” field days, when opium, opium pipes and other paraphernalia were publicly burnt. It was all very wonderful, but as to the actual “business done”—well, opinions differed then and still differ.

Another local movement with which I was not much in sympathy, was the conversion of the various temples into secular schools. In the first place they were as a rule ill-adapted for such a purpose, and secondly the iconoclastic zeal of the reformers led them into the mistake of destroying gods whose well-defined functions had been a comfort to countless past generations—without supplying any adequate substitute. As Charles Kingsley remarked of his Essex yokels: “It is better to believe in devils with jack-boots on than in nothing at all,” and this is precisely what happened to “Young China,” much to his and her detriment. One young modern official was particularly active in overthrowing idols, but he went a little too far, and then I got at him. He dumped a lot of his spoil into the harbour, which gave me the opportunity of calling his attention to his infringement of one of the laws of the country. I made him fish the idols up again, or at any rate make a show of so

doing, and worried him not a little with the idea that Heaven was above and the Earth beneath, and we none of us knew much about either. In fact, an adaptation of "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Then I opened up the back door and exposed an easy way out by suggesting that these old images should be carefully removed and preserved because many people in foreign lands would pay a good price for them!

About this time an old Customs employee at one of our lighthouses came to complain that his grandson had been arrested on a false charge of abducting a woman, and when I suggested that a Republican Government could not possibly do such things, the old man exclaimed, "Squeeze all the same bad before."

On the 6th March Amoy was visited by Sir Charles Eliot (now H.B.M.'s Ambassador at Tokio), Vice-Chancellor of the Hong-Kong University. He was on a tour, inspecting the various educational institutions in China. We had two to show him—the Anglo-Chinese College and the T'ung Wen Institute, in both of which I was much interested, especially in the latter as its Vice-President. Sir Charles impressed everybody by his intimate acquaintance with the subject of education, and with his own immense linguistic attainments. He made several very telling speeches to the students of both institutions, and left us all very much the better for his visit.

The local civil officials had a nasty jar just about this time. Five hundred Hunan braves came down in boats from the prefectural City of Changchow to embark for Shanghai *en route* for their homes. Each man carried a bag of salt—given him no doubt by the military officials in lieu of wages. N.B.—Salt was cheap in Fukien and dear up the Yangtsze. But salt is a government monopoly and its transit in private hands strictly forbidden. It was very awkward for all concerned, especially for the Commissioner of

Customs, whose duty it was to "seize the salt." However, in China a way out can generally be found, but this time it did not materialize until orders had been issued to seize the salt—which was then on board the exporting steamer, with the five hundred braves each hanging on to his own particular bag. Meanwhile, of course, I had not been idle, and as the local civil officials were friendly, we could all agree that the General was an unconscionable dog and entirely to blame. Apparently he thought so himself after a time and arranged a little scheme to save the situation and his own face. When the Customs went off to seize the salt, only a very trifling quantity was found on board, but in its place was discovered a military officer with enough money to pay off the troops on their arrival in Shanghai. The offending salt had all disappeared—how or where "pu pi wen," or ask no questions. Not the first time that an attempt "to pay off troops in terms of salt" had failed. However, we were all very pleased to see the last of the Hunan soldiers. Good fighting stuff, but, as my previous experience of them in Korea showed, dangerous people to deal with at close quarters. I heard afterwards there was considerable trouble at Shanghai before they were finally "repatriated" in far-off Hunan.

I see by my diary that I was in the habit of attending evening church on Sundays. Service was of the "Union Chapel" variety, i.e. a different Christian sect occupied the pulpit on succeeding Sundays. On one occasion an Anglican preached on "Whether God suffered when Christ was crucified?" Truly a highly metaphysical subject, but I cannot for the life of me remember whether the "Ayes" or "Noes" had it.

I was fortunate soon after my arrival to be associated with Captain Ch'en En-tao as Superintendent of Customs and my colleague. I had last seen him when in the suite of Prince Tsai Hsün's Naval Mission to Europe in 1911 with Admiral Sah and Sir

Chen-tung Liang-chêng. At the time he was laid up with a bad leg, and I had introduced him to Dr. Hartigan, who speedily effected a cure. Better-class Chinese never forget a service, however trivial, and it paved the way to much friendly intercourse. He was then a well-preserved man of about fifty-four, had travelled much, and been present at the naval battle of the Yalu. In early youth he had been one of the cadets trained in the British Navy, and always spoke with gratitude and admiration of his former shipmates. He and I and the territorial officials were all agreed as to what ought to be done to suppress smuggling in opium, arms, and salt, but what with "clan feuds" and secret societies, and in the absence of any means of steam patrols, very little headway could be made. We did our best to encourage secret information, and I remember one of our spies—a half-caste Irishman—quite my first experience of this particular combination, but not a conspicuous success as far as I can recall.

Another difficulty was the close proximity of Japan since the ceding of Formosa and the Pescadores. She was, so to speak, always at our gates, and there were a great many Chinese—Fukien born—who claimed Japanese protection. These people were not the most reliable of our population, but they had to be very delicately handled to avoid giving pretexts for interference. Even ex-Imperial and Republican officials were suspected of intriguing with the Government "over the water," which was generally credited with aiding and abetting Chinese secret societies for its own purposes. About this date the Japanese Navy—very often six cruisers at a time—would visit Amoy, no doubt with the idea of keeping Japanese influence well before the local Chinese. No wonder that a great many natives desired to be Formosan-Japanese, and responsible only to Japanese law, in the same style and causing the Chinese officials the same embarrassment as the Hong-Kong Chinese at Canton.

A Republican Parliament was supposed to be assembling at Peking, but in the provinces people hardly realized its possible effect on local affairs. Naturally enough, with agelong experience behind them they looked to the nearby official to settle all their domestic problems. One day a deputation of dealers in opium came to see me. They desired my help in preventing any interference with the sale of foreign raw opium in Amoy. I explained my position, i.e. that after issue of release permit, I had no further concern with any goods so released from Customs control. They inquired if the Government should assist them, and evidently expected a favourable answer. Were they not honest traders and the trade worth a lot of money? I asked what view did the Fukien delegates to Parliament take, on which the spokesman said in a tone that did not betoken much respect: "Oh, they are all anti-opium." He was a Penang Chinese, well educated and intelligent, about forty-eight years of age, and evidently no believer in prohibition of anything. He was not far wrong, as the subsequent history of the drug in China has unfortunately only too amply demonstrated.

We were beginning, too, in the ports to feel some reflex action from the fact of the new Customs Board in Peking being in existence. It was natural enough that the Chinese Superintendents of Customs at the Ports should look to the new institution for some extension of their powers *vis-à-vis* their colleagues, the foreign Commissioners of Customs. It was in this connection that my friendly relations with all the Chinese local officials saved me from ever having to come to grips with any of the thorny questions so constantly liable to crop up under the new dispensation. Native Customs affairs were especially ticklish. Certain native Customs revenues had been earmarked as supplementary "cover" for recent foreign loans, and consequently had to remain in the first instance under the control of the Inspector General's representative,

the Port Commissioner. I had many discussions with my Chinese colleague as to whether he or I should control, and from his point of view he was doubtless right. But I could always argue in favour of the *status quo*, and insist on the very satisfactory fact that if the Inspector General was "Receiver-General" he was also Paymaster—an arrangement that insured to my Chinese colleague the regular issue of his monthly quotas, and put him in a far better position than his territorial brethren, whose pay was often in arrears.

But my stay in Amoy was not to be prolonged, and I was soon on my way to Foochow—a neighbouring port and the headquarters of the provincial Government of Fukien. We were very sorry to leave Amoy and our many good friends Chinese and foreign there. We had a grand "send-off." Crackers galore and nearly the whole community at the jetty to say good-bye.

CHAPTER XXII

Life at Foochow—The new officials in the old surroundings—Local declaration of independence—Attempt to set aside the Commissioner of Customs—Hunan troops threaten disorder—My Deputy Commissioner and the British Consul—A club dinner and its consequences—Accept offer of London Office—Presentiment of coming disaster—Farewell visit to Hong-Kong and voyage home by a German liner.

PAGODA ANCHORAGE, the Port of Foochow, was made the next morning. It was our first view of the far-famed Min river and the grand panorama of wood-clad hills from Sharp Peak upwards, with Kuliang, the local mountain retreat, in the distance. The City of Foochow is beautifully situated, and previous to the Revolution was the home of many retired officials and scholars. It had a Manchu garrison and a Tartar General, and quite a large Manchu population. At the outbreak of the Revolution all this was changed, much to the detriment of the city's ancient prestige.

The richer Manchus fled and their houses were despoiled, while the poorer ones were reduced to starvation and misery. But the fine old buildings still remained—a silent witness to the departed glories of the city.

In due course I called on the Civil Governor, and found him installed in one of the fine old Imperial Yamens.

He was very affable and so, of course, was I; but the contrast between him and the grand old Imperial officers with whom it had hitherto been my privilege to deal filled me with melancholy.

It was my first personal experience of meeting with

the higher officials of the Republic. They were all modern Chinese—some with a smattering of English, but with little knowledge of Northern Chinese or official etiquette. However, a Commissioner of Customs has no politics, and we soon got on to terms with my ever-useful slogan “For the good of China.”

Foochow boasted a race course very prettily situated, with the Kushan Mountain in the background. Racing proper had fallen into desuetude, but the ground served excellently well for football and other sports—also for national festival celebrations and such like. The city was full of interesting old shops. I made a special study of the famous lacquer ware, and was able to make a very good collection of “worth-while” specimens.

Foochow tea, being both cheap and strong, had penetrated all over the world. There was even a direct trade, *via* Liverpool, with Buenos Ayres. A tea of good quality and free of dust was packed into decorated 1-lb. packages, then six packages are packed in a box and four such boxes packed together in matting. This was in accordance with the wishes of the South American seller and resulted in a large trade, because of conformity to consumers’ desires.

Foochow was also celebrated for the Mou-li-hua, angl. jasmine—a very fragrant flower used to scent the so-called “cumshaw,” i.e. present tea. I remember being on one occasion struck by a particularly evil smell and traced it to its source—a garden full of growing Mou-li-hua.

It was a curious contrast, this lovely scented flower being nourished on the vilely smelling contents of a Foochow manure bucket. Of such is the chemistry of Nature.

But our quiet humdrum life was destined to receive a rude shock. There had been rumours that the provinces of Kiangsu, Anhui, Kiangsi, and Kwantung had declared independence of the Peking Government, and about the 18th June it was known that overtures

were being made to the Military Governor of Fukien to join in ; also that the man, a Cantonese and a returned Japanese student, actually in control of the Hunan troops in Foochow City, was favourable to the proposed plan of "getting rid of Yüan Shih-k'ai as President of the Chinese Republic. The Military Governor wanted to resign, but the Hunan soldiers would not let him go and kept him a close prisoner. As there were about 10,000 Hunan troops inside the city and no force available outside, the situation was carpet bowls for the insurgents. Their demands were three-fold : (1) Enforced levies from gentry and merchants to maintain them and the soldiers ; (2) seizure of the Customs revenues ; (3) sole and supreme command over foreigners and natives alike. The situation was, of course, Gilbertian, but it had its serious side. Panic spread amongst all the decent law-abiding people. My Chinese colleague, the Customs Superintendent, was chased out of office and had to fly for his life, and I was waited on by a deputation of "independents" *re* giving up the Customs control and revenues. I remember the individual put forward as my "superseder" was got up in a sort of summer naval uniform and wore a very large sword. We all talked and talked. I maintained the thesis that China was one and indivisible, and that the constitution provided a way out whenever the temporary head of the Government was unacceptable to the majority of the people. *Our* duty—I thus identified myself with China and its welfare—was not to fight but to get our views adopted by the majority. At this they all looked rather blank, and I then explained to my would-be successor that, pleased as I was to see him and his friends at any time they had leisure to call on me, it was only the Inspector General of Customs who could introduce him to me officially.

Next day we had another interview. I impressed upon him the great danger of interfering with the integrity of the Commissioner's position *vis-à-vis* the

revenue collection and, again taking the "good of China" as my text, asked them one and all whether China would be best served in such matters by one who knew or by one who did not know the local ropes.

The poor young man who was to step into my shoes began perceptibly to wobble in his own uniform boots, and as it was getting rather late, we again deferred the discussion. Next day there was a welcome diversion. A Japanese torpedo destroyer, ignoring the many dangers of the treacherous twelve miles of unnavigable river between Pagoda Anchorage and Foochow City, was seen to be actually at anchor in front of the Custom House—a very plain hint to all and sundry that foreign interests were concerning themselves in the local revolution. An incident was the arrival of Sun Yat-sen, but he stopped only a day or two at Pagoda and then transhipped to Japan. His coming seemed to have been expected by the Japanese Consul, but whatever was intended by the visit seemed to have miscarried; the incident, however, revived the talk about Japanese instigation in the recent movement.

But the whole affair was now petering out. The Cantonese Hsu, who no doubt was at the bottom of the trouble with the Hunan troops, had found it convenient to go home, and was clever enough to skip to Canton in time to save his skin.

The name of the Civil Governor quietly reappeared on some public notification, and this was taken to mean that the state of martial law proclaimed by the "independents" had ceased.

The first clause of that document was to the effect that anybody opposing the New Administration would be executed. They brought it in to me and I remember saying, "Well, I suppose there is no opposition," at which futile sally they all laughed, sore at heart as they were.

On the 9th August, the authority of Yüan Shih-

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k'ai once more ran in the province, but we still had the problem as to how to get quit of the Hunan braves in practical charge of Foochow City. No doubt Yüan had been kept well posted as to the "true inwardness" of the situation, and knew as well as we did that the province was not behind the silly idiots of secret society men who made all the trouble. As related my old colleague was obliged to fly for his life and remain in concealment, but I so managed matters for him in Peking through the Inspector General as to avoid any suspicion on Yüan's part of his integrity. But the experience had been too hard and he died soon afterwards.

I remember how his son used to come to me by night with letters for Yüan's eye alone, all of which I am glad to think reached him and vindicated a very loyal old servant of the Chinese Government.

Things had no sooner quieted down a bit than a very unpleasant Customs episode took place. There was a farewell dinner at the Club to my Deputy Commissioner, whose home leave had been granted. He was a genial, good-natured, easy-going Irishman who never had an ill-thought of anybody, but on this occasion on the way home he seemed to have light-heartedly broken the glass of a very antiquated street lamp over the gate of the British Consulate. He then floated back into the Club, where in a few minutes he was followed by the infuriated Consular officer, armed with a big stick. He shouted: "You have smashed my lamp; I will wire to Peking and get you sacked."

Blows were exchanged, but unfortunately the French Consul—a man of huge size—intervened, no doubt with the best intentions, but as he only restrained one side the Consul was able to hit my too-cheery Deputy some severe blows on the head with his stick without fear of reprisals. There was no doubt that he was very badly mauled, while his assailant got off untouched. I only heard of the matter the next

morning, and immediately set to work to make peace between the parties. I wrote immediately to the Consul offering my services as a "mutual friend" of both parties. The offer was declined, and I then went to see him.

I should mention that he was also the hero of the Pakhoi experience already related, so I was not surprised to find him with a very full head of steam. At first he declined to discuss the subject with me, but later warmed up and discussed not only it but a great many other grievances—of which I knew nothing.

He ended up by saying apropos of my Deputy, "He has been in trouble elsewhere"; to which I replied, "So have you." At which he said, "Oh yes, at—, but if you had seen the record you would see I was right." I came away from the interview more than ever impressed that he was not normal and that his case was pathological.

This, of course, only made it more difficult. No doubt if he had been brought up as I had been, under Sir Robert Hart, he would not have had time to develop so many angles; but the British Government seemed to give enormous latitude to the vagaries of its Consular officers in the Far East and appeared quite oblivious of the amount of mental and moral suffering a man charged with judicial functions, but off his moral balance, could cause in out-of-the-way places. In this case the limit was passed when the Consul put the Deputy Commissioner on trial in the Consular Court on a charge of "malicious damage" to the lamp and secured his conviction.

The defendant was willing to plead guilty to damaging the lamp but demurred to the idea of being actuated by malice—but the Consul insisted that the crime was malicious. I was not present at the trial, but from all accounts it was Gilbertian with the Consul as prosecutor, jury, and judge, quite in the Koko style. Meanwhile, the whole matter had got up to Peking, and was *sub judice* there. Reams of paper had

been written about it from all possible angles. I was told that the Consul's reply covered forty sheets of foolscap.

I have no doubt it did, as he was always discursive in self-defence. However, the happy result was that he retired from the Service "*Zur aller Welt Behagen.*"

However, we were soon to be involved in more serious matters. It would have been foreign to Yüan Shih-k'ai's character to allow the authors of the recent "independence of Fukien" movement to get off scot free, and he now began to reinforce the loyal troops. Transports and cruisers began to arrive, the Min ports were occupied, and the Hunan troops in the city isolated as far as possible.

As already related, their leader had fled. They had no artillery, only rifles and side-arms. Still, they greatly outnumbered the force outside. Artillery could not be used to dislodge them without the risk of burning down half the city and that at any moment—should a leader be found—another *coup d'état* might eventuate.

The whole affair was very capably managed by Admiral Liu Kuan-hsing, the Minister of Marine—a Foochow man sent specially from Peking to deal with it. It was not an easy task to tackle some thousands of armed and organized men in the heart of a crowded city. The Hunanese said: "We will only come out on our own terms. If these are not secured to us we will wait here until we get what we want, and if you intend to turn us out you will have to fight for it."

But their flank was turned by a very clever manœuvre. They had been in garrison a good many years and many of them had contracted marriages with Foochow women. The difficulty was one of repatriation, and it was suggested that in the case of men married to Foochow dames repatriation could be made unnecessary by the simple expedient of allowing them to become Fukienese by marriage. The

idea caught on, and we had so many thousand men less to deal with. Nobody showed any hurry. This hastened on a settlement, and one fine day the remaining Hunan troops, some 3,000 strong, took ship for Shanghai, all paid up to date and happy. I was a good deal with the Admiral and his officers throughout the trouble. One of them was an old friend—an officer in Li Hung-chang's "Tigers," i.e. Anhui body-guard.

Admiral Liu had conducted all the operations from his residence in the Arsenal at Pagoda Anchorage—an easily defensible position. To have done otherwise would have exposed him to a serious risk of assassination. He seldom went out, but on one occasion I had a visit from him quite incognito at the office and without notice. The rebel leader was still at large, and offering great sums for the murder of Yüan Shih-k'ai's local officials.

We had a very interesting talk about China, Japan, and Russia. He was an old "disciple" of Li Hung-chang, and was able to discuss the great man's policy in dealing with the tangled skein of China's difficulties.

I wanted him to come up to my house to tiffin, but he declined. He knew the danger and I think did not wish to involve me in any way. Liu was not only brave but merciful, and lives in my memory as a Chinese official of the highest type. His dealings with the Hunan braves and their civilian friends outside were crowned with success largely because of these sterling qualities. It was at Foochow that I met Archdeacon Wolfe, who came to Foochow in 1861—a lusty G.O.M., not looking more than sixty-five at the utmost. The missionary body at Foochow has always been celebrated for men of light and leading, and possessed several first-class educational establishments. Chief among them Trinity College—on Dublin lines and run by Irish professors.

The pupils were keen on English, and I remember how well they did the Banquet scene from "Macbeth" and how lustily they sang their college songs.

"Banquo," "Macbeth," and "Lady Macbeth" were particularly good. The costumes were those of ancient China and all were part-perfect. The play was given in English to a large audience of Chinese, including women and children, all of whom appeared to be able to follow the action of the play without understanding the spoken word : another tribute to the dramatic qualities of the immortal William as illustrated in his plays.

There was much of interest in the port itself and in the beauty of the surrounding country. I used to make almost daily excursions to the hill above the club-house, whence a most marvellous view of the Min bridge, the city beyond and the surrounding arms of the river, with the mountains in the background, was obtainable and varied with the time of day into many lights and shadows. On moonlight nights it was especially wonderful and sometimes very eerie. I have still in my possession some very artistic photographs of local scenes done by the late Baron v. Seckendorff, who had a peculiar gift of selecting always the right point of view.

Our stay came to an end rather unexpectedly in a letter from the Inspector General offering me the London Office for two years, with retirement after a year on full-pay leave. It is a curious fact that, though I accepted at once, I had hardly sent off the telegram when both my wife and I were seized with a most terrible fit of depression. We could not analyse it—the leading idea seemed to be that we were running into some great danger to the nature of which we had no clue. We thought of this and thought of that, all to no purpose, and resolved at last to throw the thing off. But it completely spoilt the situation for us—this dread and warning of some indefinable disaster in front. It was always in front and we were running into it. Of course, we had—in common with most people—no idea of what was in store for the human race in 1914, but I just jot down the experience for what it may be worth.

So little did we dream of war with Germany that we travelled home in the Nord-Deutscher Lloyd *Lützow* from Hong-Kong on 28th May, 1914.

We were able to put in about a week in Hong-Kong before going on board, and enjoyed it very much. We had a wonderful motor ride after dinner along the new (to us) Jubilee Road. A tyre gave way and a thunder-storm caught us while repairs were in progress, but at long last we got home, wet but happy, about 12.30 p.m. I had long wished to visit the Hong-Kong University, and by the kindness of Dr. and Mrs. Francis Clark we had tea there and were shown all over the place. Engineering was then, as now I believe, the main feature, but, of course, the whole scheme is progressive and expands in every direction as funds allow. During my terms of office as Canton Commissioner I had always warmly urged its claims on the Canton high authorities and gentry, and invariably found them willing and sympathetic. I fancy that one Viceroy gave quite a large sum.

Cinemas were just beginning in Hong-Kong. We saw a most excellent version of the *Three Musketeers* in a place more like a shed than a theatre. The poor Frenchman who was running the show looked feverish and warm, but he wound the camera gallantly all through the performance that lasted from nine to midnight. I have often noticed the gallant air of the French in the Far East—soldiers, sailors, and civilians alike. They often die in their tracks still “manning themselves with dauntless air.”

On arrival at Singapore we heard the news of the disaster to the *Empress of Ireland* in the St. Lawrence. We slept the night on shore in the reconstructed Hôtel de l'Europe. Query—are electric light and fans in a small bedroom and bathroom as comfortable as the old spaciousness of former years, with the slow-moving punkahs and tubs of cool water from the well? On returning on board we began to notice that all was not well with the Nord-Deutscher. The ship,

albeit a *Post-dampfer*, was being worked on cargo-boat lines, and the comfort of passengers quite a minor consideration.

In the second class were two old (outdoor Department Customs) friends of mine—both Germans and men who had done good work for China and the Chinese Customs. They had accepted “retirement terms” and were both going home for good. I often wonder what became of them “in their own dear native land” at war with half the world!

The passengers were beginning to shake down together, but they were a rather uninteresting lot—mostly Germans and all very anti-British. The news of the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife reached the ship by wireless on the morning of the 29th June.

Its effect on board was instantaneous. Dark looks at us and earnest “confabs” between the Germans all over the ship. They, of course, knew that it might mean the dawn of *der Tag* at any moment; we, of course, did not. My wife was in a desperate state of health, and our one thought was how to get on shore without an utter breakdown.

This we did after a terrible struggle at the last moment. The captain was in a high-strung state to get in and out of Antwerp as soon as possible. The ship was posted to leave at 8 a.m., but he rushed all the Southampton passengers on shore before seven and nearly carried us on to Belgium. We just got over the gangway a moment before it was hauled away. The voyage lives in my memory as the most unpleasant one I ever made. The *Lützow* was captured by the British during the war and eventually sunk by a German submarine while under the Red Ensign. She had, I believe, sufficient armament on board to equip her at short notice as an armed merchantman at the time of her capture.

During the voyage people on board persisted in taking me for a German, and it was not until after

a rather acrimonious talk with all and sundry that I disabused them of the idea. But as said talk was conducted in the German language it was not, I could see, as prosperous in the ear of the hearer as I meant it to be.

I met, however, one or two interesting people on board. One a typical North German from German New Guinea. He was a huge man of middle age and had evidently done well as a Colonist. His only grief was that of late years the German Government had taken too much interest in the territory and had actually sent out officials who seemed to think the white man should not always have everything his own way. "Junge Juristen ganz ohne Erfahrung," he called them. These misguided people were a thorn in the side of the old Colonists, who believed in the big stick well laid on as a panacea for all native ills. My friend was accompanied by his wife—a very handsome Swede. She had evidently found New Guinea a "disgusting dreary desert" in the social sense and told me the young men did nothing but drink and were very apathetic in society. She seemed rather bored with her husband, but shrewd enough to appreciate the potential value of his large fortune in the Hamburg select circles whither they were bound. Still, she very nearly overdid things with a young and rather enterprising American Jew who, in teaching her the "tango," came perhaps within measurable distance of being too near to be denied; but she fetched up in time, and the last view I had of her was *schwärmig* in the arms of her own hubby to the strains of the "Schoene blaue Donau."

However, we were very glad to be quit of the Vaterland and to find ourselves in the Windsor Hotel within easy reach of the offices of the Chinese Customs in Old Queen Street, Westminster, on the 3rd July.

CHAPTER XXIII

I take charge of the London Office in July 1914—The outbreak of War—Complicated situation owing to China's neutrality—The exodus of British Customs employees from China to join the War—London Office work—Uniforms for Indoor Staff and how we provided them—Some reflections on official dress in Imperial and Republican times in China—The War Trade Department and Chinese Post Office ink.

IN VIEW OF WHAT came after it is curious to think that we travelled home by the German Mail in May 1914—and if the truth must be told it was because the German Mail treated its passengers more kindly than the P. and O. We were under the German flag, and on French soil at Algiers, when the “slow fuse” of Archduke Franz Ferdinand’s assassination began smouldering in the vast powder magazine of Europe, but no one outside the war party of the Central Empires had any idea of the secret terror that was preparing.

I am not of a forecasting temperament—that is to say, I do not fret or elate myself about what may happen in ten years’ time—and I landed with an open mind and an impression from somewhere that “sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” quite vaguely, almost cheerfully. I was more concerned with the past than either the present or the future—1881, my first term, young and all my troubles before me, and 1891—than with 1914.

The office that I left in June 1896 had changed little, and the invaluable office-keeper, Henry Sinstadt, was still on duty—as alert and efficient as ever—ready to welcome me back. I suppose unconsciously I expected to officiate on the well-worn lines for a couple

of years, then be granted a year's leave, after which I should resign in the hope—very shadowy—of spending a few last days divided between London and Dresden.

I was extremely busy taking over charge and getting into the atmosphere again, which is very different from that of a Commissioner's office in any China port, large or small; and I sat almost ruefully in the chair, literally as well as metaphorically, of my old Chief, James Duncan Campbell—with sometimes nearly an illusion that I heard him drive to the front door and be ushered upstairs with the slight halt in his step that was characteristic of him. It seemed strange to be in the same surroundings and yet the human factor so changed, both in London and Peking. The great personality of Robert Hart still rather overshadowed the new Inspector General, and I sympathized with the feelings of the old Sikh soldier, quoted by Macaulay, who turned from the lesser living to salute the picture of the greater dead.

In this mood of hard work and inner memories I took less interest than usual in European politics, and it was not until the 29th or 30th July that I suddenly was pulled up by the awful realization that the long-looked-for crisis had reached us. Like most people in the Far East I knew that Germany had exorbitant ambitions, and that War was not only possible but inevitable—some day. Yet one always hoped that somehow the doom would be averted by German common sense, or by timely preparations and warnings on the part of those who were threatened. Neither brake was applied. Germans threw their sense to the whirlwinds of megalomania, and we seemed to think that the least prepared was the best protected.

Then came the splendid decision of Belgium and the appeal of her heroic King to the other party to the Treaty. One watchdog was false—would the other hold true? Britain's answer came in one day!

I need not enlarge on what followed the 4th August so far as Europe was concerned, but in the terror and agony of that cataclysm the curiously anomalous position first of China and then of the Chinese Customs Service became intensified to a perilous degree. The Service was nominally Chinese, but was intrinsically and fundamentally international. It was called the Customs, but was far more than that—as it stood for the security of many of China's debts and therefore for China's solvency and integrity.

It is never any use worrying about what might have been, or crying over the kind and amount of milk that could have been spilt; but I may from interior knowledge venture on one remark, which is that if the Allies had lost and Germany had pulled off her scheme of world domination, China and the Chinese Customs would have been about the biggest asset in the new arrangement of the World under the Mailed Fist.

I thought of all this on or about the 6th August, 1914, and, if I must tell the truth, it struck me that the odds were against us, and—well, let us leave it at that. Meantime, so long as the War went on, until the day of decision, the Chinese Customs, doomed or not, had to function in perhaps the queerest set of tangles ever seen on this planet.

The Inspector General, holding the fort at Peking, was the British head of a Service containing nationals of *all* the belligerents, all the possible belligerents, and all the neutrals, hostile and friendly. He, a Britisher, was in the employment of a neutral Government that was decidedly friendly to the Allies, although in the beginning not altogether unapprehensive of the consequences if Germany won. So the British head had to hold a very delicate balance from the very first day of hostilities, and he deserves every credit for his courage and the unswerving straightforwardness with which he played a difficult part.

The Chinese authorities also, with that innate

"poise" which never forsakes their Confucian minds, handled the situation admirably. They did not trouble to split hairs, but went on the broad principle of unconditioned neutrality, and treated all nations alike. The British Inspector General and his international staff followed suit.

The first and biggest complication arose over Kiaochow, when the Japanese and British took it. The Germans were running the Chinese Customs there under an agreement with Peking. They had to stop running it and depart by force to Japan for internment; but China remained neutral and the other Germans in her service went on in her own ports.

It is not difficult to see that this complicated things in London for a Britisher who still had enemy colleagues in a neutral China. Of course only in England could such a Gilbertian position have been maintained for years, but so it was. Matters were not made easier by the inevitable suppression of our official cipher. I could no longer get private instructions from Peking, nor send any official information except in open cables—which was not always discreet. Despatches took a very long time in transit and were sometimes lost by torpedoing, though sent in duplicate. They were also "censored" in London, and, generally speaking, things were "difficult."

It was a fine old struggle to get any supplies out, as of course it was not admissible to export anything needed at home or that might fall into enemy hands and help them. Many of our amateur and other officials seemed like Barrie's old Scotch invalid, who was "none wanting to pray or sing Psalms," but "wanted to argy." They "wanted to argy" all the time. It would have simplified matters if they had said authoritatively "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not," but that was not their way. As often as not they would say nothing.

It is, of course, not possible to give the internal history of the London Office for the whole period

of the War, but I should like to chronicle a few illustrative cases of our difficulties, anxieties and tragedies. The very first thing I had on my hands was the delicate undertaking of getting safely out of England a German colleague who was married to an English wife and was therefore enjoying himself in our capital when the dogs of war were suddenly unleashed. He was very pro-British and not at all happy about hostilities, and we asked him to tea on the eve of his departure, when he was distinctly lachrymose and sighed over the necessity of taking Paris. Luckily for him, we were still expecting Germany to "play the game," our papers were talking of "crossing lances with our knightly foes," and Lord Haldane's murmurs "that Germany was his spiritual home" had not wholly died away. My German friend went out *via* Canada just in time, as presently rumours of atrocities began to leak through, and internment would have been his fate and a lot of worry mine! It was before passports and other hindrances had got into working order. To detain him would have raised some ticklish questions at once—about the position of Germans under Customs control in China. This is, happily, not a logical world, but it would have been awkward to deal with this tangle—Herr So-and-so in Peking could work for and be paid by the Inspector General, but in London (though still under the I.G.'s orders and in his pay) der Lieber Herr had to be locked up. When you cannot see your way through a question it is best to drop it, and I am still relieved in my mind that Herr "X" was providentially removed before he became a serious complication.

One of the senior American Commissioners was also then in London with his wife and daughter, and they had some difficulty in getting a passport owing to the rush home of Americans who believed that Hindenburg would march through our streets in a few weeks. As this colleague was on leave not connected at all with the London Office, I had no

responsibility. Being a New Englander of the real old American stock, he looked rather wistfully at the Allied flags that were displayed everywhere—only six then, French, Belgian, Russian, Serbian, Japanese, and our own—and patently regretted the absence of the Stars and Stripes.

Naturally the first result of the War was to upset all the Customs men on leave, and we had constant inquiries from them as their state was rather deplorable. The I.G. had issued a warning that their holiday might have to be curtailed if their services were required in China before their leave expired. He left it to each man's conscience as to whether it was his duty to stick to China or join the War. It was, of course, an unfortunate necessity that going on War service (China being at the time a neutral) meant resignation. In spite of this nearly all the men of arms-bearing age joined up and sacrificed their careers. The I.G., while deploring their absence from the point of view of his own need of men, characteristically remarked, "If they hadn't, I should have thought they weren't the right sort."

The international composition of the Service continued to cause widespread complications. Take this case in illustration. There was a Russian on leave, who had gone to Switzerland. He had money invested in Riga and also in Hamburg. As a Russian he could not get at the Hamburg money, neither could he get the Riga funds transferred to Geneva. So he wrote his tale of woe to the L.O. and we did our best to help the situation. This was typical of the way the whole *personnel* on leave looked to the L.O. to manage their private affairs at short notice. There was often great hardship and severe nervous strain over money questions, as even in normal times it is no joke to be left stranded, but in war-time it is doubly trying.

I have alluded to the Customs being security for part of China's obligations, and this appeared when various enemy rumours were skilfully set afloat about

the Chinese loans. The Stock Exchange being closed and the price of all British Government Stock secured by agreement, quotations for all foreign stock were merely nominal, as such could not be dealt with on the Exchange. However, the craftily arranged slump was averted, and reassuring news from the I.G. soon restored the investors' confidence.

As time went on things did not improve, and the year 1915 opened with great embarrassments for the Chinese Customs, and from my vantage-point in London I could not help seeing that the wholesale exodus of young men from their jobs in China was a tactical mistake. There seemed to have been a lot of irresponsible talk going round the Far East on the supposed lack of recruits in England. Even if this had been true, which it was not, the Government had a simple remedy at hand in the shape of compulsory military service—they could even have gone farther and conscripted *all* labour, male and female, much to their own easement and the satisfaction of the country. Heads of big businesses and services in China could hardly tell their employees in so many words that they must not go. Rather ought the employees themselves, perhaps, to have had the sense to know—without saying anything about it—that Britain had need of them to carry on in China. Flanders was not the only spot where trenches had to be occupied, but of course to stay where they were and do the nearest duty was not so spectacular as the "send off" to join the War ten thousand miles away. "They also serve who only stand and wait," and the negligible quantity—from the numerical point of view—of British youths, who left their jobs in China and Japan, did more than "their bit"—though they could not see it in that light—towards weakening British grip on Far Eastern trade. I always ventured to air this view, at the risk in those shattering days of being called various names and thought "unpatriotic."

"THE THINGS THAT REALLY MATTER"

Tragedy certainly predominated in our London Office work and experience, but there were gleams of what Bruce Bairnsfather slyly called "the things that really matter" just to prove that we were Briitsh. Can anyone forget his cartoon with the above legend attached, showing a man in the midst of a wild bombardment making out a list of "the tins of raspberry jam issued in the last fortnight." It did not turn on jam at the L.O. or anything to eat, but just when it seemed not a particularly happy moment for such a quest, it occurred cheerily to the I.G. that a long-felt want should be supplied and an appropriate uniform designed and created for the adornment on official occasions of himself, his Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners and Assistants also (if they could afford the swank), and I was instructed to make the necessary preliminary inquiries.

Just then what cloth that could be got was dear and none too good, also all the branches of the clothing trade were full up with orders for War Services—tailors were "all in pieces" and everything dissolving. However, we did our best—I dare say in the spirit that they counted the tins of raspberry jam, and eventually a very handsome uniform was evolved for all ranks, including the Inspector General, with a beautiful book of specially designed illustrations of dressed figures very artistically carried out to assist the wearers in assuming their uniforms. "When I first put this uniform on" as it were, showing how the insignia of orders (when we had 'em) should be worn! The whole work was done by the tailoring department of the Army and Navy Stores. I thought it "all very capital" and was assured by experts that our book was the best the trade had ever seen. But somehow or other the matter seems to have been shelved and I never had the chance of seeing myself in the full-dress uniform of a Commissioner of Chinese Customs, although I still nourish a hope of meeting the I.G. and my late colleagues arrayed like Solomon in all his

glory, sporting the coats we so painstakingly designed for them. The idea, like many others, of a uniform for the Indoor Staff originated with Sir Robert Hart in the late 'Sixties, and I believe that in 1872 the Chinese Customs delegates to the Paris Exhibition actually wore a uniform from his design—dark green cloth with gold lace bamboo pattern fittings, *plus* a sword. They must have been a very impressive sight at the opening ceremony. As Monseigneur Benson said of his robes, "Peacocks weren't in it."

This question of uniform had long been a moot point with the Indoor Staff. As a rule the British section was against it, and therefore it was a matter of surprise that the Chief Secretary—a Britisher—was said to be the prime mover in the instructions to the L.O. concerning it.

To the Outdoor Staff uniform was of course essential, to secure for its members proper respect on board vessels in the execution of their duty. It was obviously impossible that un-uniformed persons could search ships and make seizures. But with the Indoor it was different. Their duties were inside the various Customs Offices, and there was no more necessity for them to wear a distinctive livery than for a clerk in a bank to be so marked out. In the old Imperial days, when all Chinese and Manchurian officials wore the dress and insignia of their rank, it might have been argued that the Commissioner of Customs should equally be provided with some equivalent of the "Kuan-i," or official robes, of his native colleagues. But no such demand, as far as I know, ever came from their side. They were quite content if the Commissioner appeared on official visits in a coat, preferably black, long enough to cover his posterior, and they also liked him to wear a tall hat and the insignia of Chinese decorations—if he had any.

In Canton, where the climate is punishing nearly all the year round, I often used to feel sorry for the Foreign Consuls—many of whom had no white

uniforms—sweltering in gold-braided coats and trousers of the regulation cloth. The only exception was the United States representative. He adopted my rig—to wit, a very accurately cut black alpaca frock coat, ditto trousers, a white shirt and collar and black tie, black socks and black thin shoes, with a tall hat, completed a very distinctive “Kuan-i,” and did not weigh all told more than three to four pounds. By the way, it is not generally known that a black tall hat, by reason of its air space between head and hat, is one of the best *sola topees* in existence. In these later republican times even the above might be considered *de trop* and a departure from true democratic simplicity. It was the pride of the new republican civil officials to go about in shabby clothes of rough cut, in still shabbier chairs of the ordinary street-hire type. With the military, of course, it was different. I remember one notable local General who wore a most extraordinary mixture of Continental military and naval uniform with an enormous curved cavalry sword *an seine linke*.

No doubt the “Tu-chuns,” who virtually rule China at the present moment, are more reasonably got up, although—if one may judge by their portraits in the Public Press—considerable latitude in the selection of uniforms appears to be the rule.

As far as the Customs Indoor men are concerned, uniform should no doubt be in existence to wear on appropriate occasions—as Consuls wear theirs—but not for everyday use in the office. I fancy the consensus of Service opinion supports this view. We can safely leave it at that; but I shall always be glad to recall that I had a hand in creating a very handsome and congruous “Kuan-i” for my quondam colleagues—with the havoc of war all round and the sound of German bombs echoing in our ears.

As “time and the hour” ran through those roughest days, the pressure on the London Office increased rather than slackened, and there was a

IN THE CHINESE CUSTOMS SERVICE

constant stream of inquirers to deal with on the spot, seeing that no rapid communication with Peking was possible. Though no one seemed to trouble about it, the anomalous position of our Service of course continued all through China's neutrality, and had to be reckoned with both in and out of our ranks. A false step and a disagreeable crisis might have ensued, and I jalousie that no other countries than Britain and China could have had the stolidity to maintain so irregular a *modus* under such almost impossible conditions. Naturally, we always assumed that there was nothing unhealthy in the aspect of affairs, and when we had to skate on thin ice I was very careful not to put up boards with "Danger" anywhere near the cracks, as I found much truth in the vulgar saying, "What the h'eye don't see, the 'eart don't grieve after." Still there were times !

For instance, in lighter vein there was a joyous passage at the close of 1915 with the War Trade Department. It will be remembered that the Chinese Postal Service had been completely separated from the Customs administration, and was therefore no longer represented in London by the London Office of the Inspectorate General of Customs. The Postal Department obtained their stationery supplies direct from contractors in London, and it was from one of these I received a despairing letter, quite an S.O.S. The whole supply of ink for the postal people was being held up by the War Trade Department, who contended that while they knew the Customs they had no knowledge of the Posts, and therefore they could not grant them the special privileges accorded to the Chinese Customs as a branch of the Chinese Government. The Department asked for a guarantee from some official personage as to the "status" of the Posts before releasing the inks. Ink, I may remark, was from the first "on the Index." It contained substances badly needed by the Ministry of Munitions, and the Ministry of Munitions was

always admonishing the War Trade people as to the vital necessity of allowing no ink to leave the country without first consulting them. The contractors appealed to me and I interviewed the Chief of the War Trade Department. He laughed a good deal and said that, as "the milk was already spilt," he would have been inclined to pass it, since he did not think it would be worth the while of the Munitions people to extract from the finished article whatever—valuable from their point of view—constituents might be obtainable. But he agreed that it would be more satisfactory and proper to have an authoritative statement as to the official status of the Chinese Postal Department from the Chinese Minister. This was duly forthcoming and the Posts admitted to the benevolent neutrality privileges so greatly prized by the Chinese Customs. As an ex-Assistant Postal Secretary in the old régime, I was able to state from personal knowledge that the transaction was *bona fide* and quite in order to the satisfaction of the Minister.

CHAPTER XXIV

Inspector General's financial responsibilities enlarged in 1917—Replacing the British personnel in Customs Service—A storm in a tea-cup in London Anglo-Chinese circles—We display the Five-Nation flag of China at the London Office—Chinese musical instruments for the Labour Corps in France—The Inspector General becomes Sir Francis Aglen, K.B.E.—His tactful elimination of the Teutonic element in the Chinese Customs—British propaganda in China—War trade difficulties—How we shipped a lighthouse—The Armistice rejoicings.

A PRETTY AMERICAN typist girl once complained that "life was just one thing after another," and we found it so at the London Office all through 1916. It is outside the scope of this book to record or enlarge upon experiences painfully endured by us all, so I merely "mark time" and remove the calendar to 1917, when several changes took place.

The opening of the year witnessed some notable extensions of the financial responsibilities of the Inspector General. He had taken on the whole of the indemnity service in addition to the usual loan service, and, helped of course by the concurrent rise in the silver exchange, had come out with a handsome credit balance at the end of the previous year.

It was even possible to do without calling on the Salt revenue for the first half of 1917, and this meant that there was a larger surplus, after all secured obligations had been provided for, at the disposal of the Finance Minister. That functionary was very short of money and the political situation very far from stable, although the impending split between North and South seemed to be getting more remote, even if the contending parties in the new Parliament

did occasionally fling ink-pots and rulers at each other!

The Kuo-Ming-Tang, with its Cantonese *imprimatur*, was counter-balanced by the Northern Military Party, neither being strong enough decisively to down the other. The fact that—politics apart—China did not do so badly in 1916 and started 1917 with fair prospects was a powerful, though silent, witness to the efficient methods of the Customs Service and its foreign head.

Censorship and refusal to allow code cables of course still prevailed, but we had got more used to the loss of our facilities, though I sometimes wondered how Robert Hart and J. D. Campbell would have survived the lack of the telegrams that were officially meat and drink to them both. Sir Francis and I had temperaments that differed widely from those of our respective predecessors, and we missed the stimuli of constant messages less. The new I.G. was far less prone to "fireworks" and "stunts" of political origin, and I did not have to waste any time trying to guess what he would do next, for I knew, broadly speaking, that he would act reasonably and be satisfied with my attempts to do likewise.

The time had come when it was necessary to repair as far as possible the depletion due to war conditions in the foreign and especially in the British *personnel* of the Customs Service. At first it looked rather impossible that we should get young Britishers for unwarlike work in China, and had we failed a large influx of other elements must have resulted. The international features of the Service would have been obscured by a too great preponderance of recruits of neither Chinese nor Western provenance, and the valuable balance of East and West in its ranks might have been irrevocably lost. Luckily, however, it was early recognized in the right quarter that there were British trenches, impalpable and invisible, but still real, to be held elsewhere than on the actual battle

fronts, and I fancy all of us in the London Office during the last two years of the War will look back to certain pages in the Service lists of those years with pride and thankfulness that we were able to "do our bit" towards providing the "all-red" units recorded therein.

But even when we secured our men, things would go wrong and dismal impressions emerged of slips between cups and lips. On one occasion there was an awful hitch. We had a most satisfactory batch of recruits booked to leave by a P. and O. boat, when to our horror this steamer was suddenly "taken off" and the China service intermitted for a time. One desperate chance remained—the bare possibility of catching the previous steamer at Marseilles. There was a further complication about "visas" for France on their passports. I rushed round everywhere, and by virtue of a special request from high authority and the kind co-operation of our French allies all formalities were waived, and I got my documents put through in record time. But there were some anxious moments until we got our men off at Charing Cross next morning.

Somewhere about this date or a little earlier there was an amusing "storm in a tea-cup" in Anglo-Chinese circles, owing to a communication to the Press by an American journalist to the effect that there were many Germans in the ranks of the British Consular Service in China. Ex-Ministers, ex-Consuls, ex-everybody took it up vehemently, denying the soft allegation. Governments wired to Peking and Peking wired to Governments, and an amount of heat was engendered that quite flabbergasted the original starter of the hare. In due course I interviewed him and acquainted him with what some people like to call the "true facts." We had some very friendly talks, and I even discovered the source of the misleading information that so disturbed our Anglo-Chinese world. When we parted he said: "I guess the next time I want to

publish anything about China I will come to you first," and added, "If I had known you before, I don't suppose this would have happened." He was an excellent fellow and is now a very prominent international journalist, but to my regret we have never met again.

Certain tendencies against neutrality became observable in China before this, but nothing definite happened, yet there was a feeling that China was coming into the War. So far as I know there was no direct pressure put on her by the Allies, whereas the Central Empires were no doubt sending much propaganda through various channels, and there are those who declare that German psychology went as far astray with China as in other quarters, particularly when they assumed that the Chinese combined savage ferocity with cold thrift, and would admire the idea of wiring dead soldiers into large bundles and extracting valuable grease, etc., for war use from the corpses. This did assuredly impress China, but in quite the opposite direction as might have been expected from a race that holds the dead in great respect.

By a pleasing coincidence China's adhesion to the War against the Central Powers was announced the same day that the first U.S.A. troops marched through London in August 1917—after the rest of us had borne the burden for three years! The London Office was glad to be able to display the Flag of the Five Nations comprising the new Chinese Republic. It was quite a puzzle to our neighbours, who knew the old Dragon flag well enough, but had never seen the five-nation successor. I think we got a notice in the evening papers.

Adding China and America as allies, Germany then had over one thousand millions of the human race arrayed against her. China did not send an Expeditionary Force, but the Labour Corps in France was augmented, and I heard a good deal about these helpers from an ex-colleague of mine who commanded

a company. He wrote enthusiastically about their *moral*, cheerfulness, and keenness for work, but he feared (this was in September) that during the winter months his men would feel rather dull in long spells of enforced idleness unless some amusement and distraction could be provided for them. He suggested that if a few Chinese musical instruments could be got together and sent to him in France it could not fail to be very welcome.

His particular lot were all Northern Chinese, but although I did not quite know how far South and North differed in this respect, I thought the P'i-P'a would be appreciated everywhere throughout the Eighteen Provinces, and that the "San-hsien" would not be far behind. Then there was the Chinese flute—the "Ti-tzu." That I knew was met with universally, east and west, north and south, all over China—not to mention also the "small drum."

So we surmised what to send, if only we could get them in London and not lose precious time in writing to China for them. Luckily, as usual in emergencies, the Chinese Legation threw itself into the breach, sent out an S.O.S. and soon found the required articles in various unsuspected quarters in London. To me it was a particularly fascinating idea that a concert with Chinese music on the appropriate instruments should hold its own with other shows behind the lines. But I was sceptical—unduly so, as it turned out—regarding the supply of musicians. Van Aalst, the leading authority on Chinese music, says that the ability to play on the instruments he so ably described "is confined to the few"; generally speaking, blind men play most frequently, and the Labour Corps had no C 3 element. But there was always a chance that some of the men had brought their talents with them. I had often noticed that Chinese travelling by sea invariably have someone with them able to beguile the long hours between meals by obliging with "a little music."

We were lucky enough by the kindly exertions of the Chinese Legation and my friend, Mr. Yun Liang-tsao, officiating Consul-General for China in London, to send some "Hu-ch'in" or violins and "Ti-tzu," flutes, and we wrote off to a shop he recommended in Shanghai for a further supply. I tried hard to get a few of the long horns which in the hands—or rather the mouth—of a Chinese soldier make such terror-striking sounds. I have often listened to them, and thought what a fitting prelude, so to speak, that would be to a general extermination of obstacles in front. In fact, these sounds, coupled with weird grimaces and tumbling, were essential features of a Chinese advance into battle in days of yore, and I have no doubt were instrumental "in putting the wind up" for all but very undauntable foes. I felt, indeed, that Joshua must have destroyed the walls of Jericho by some such nerve-racking "Trompeten."

However, these superior treasures were not to be had for love or money, but possibly in their absence music in the Chinese Labour camps missed a grand opportunity of suggesting a new kind of trench attack. But as things were, the great standby proved to be a "Dekko" gramophone, with Chinese records and also some military and other Western music. Of these latter records Jack Shepherd's "Laughing Songs" caught on at once, while Harry Lauder's Pipe Band was always a prime favourite. The music tent was, I believe, crowded all day and all night with a delighted audience of "Chinks."

Apropos of this word "Chink," many modern Chinese think it was applied to their countrymen in contempt by Western men in the U.S.A. But so far as the Great War is concerned this was not so. "Chink" took rank with "Tommy Atkins" and the French "poilu" as a term of affection for an ally who had proved his worth and valour on many occasions.

Without any warning to anyone concerned the Inspector General was amongst the New Year Honours

of 1918, and became henceforward Sir Francis Aglen, K.B.E. His predecessors had been G.C.M.G. and K.C.M.G. respectively, and many people thought that history should have been repeated in his case, especially in view of his devotion to both China and his own country since 1911, and the many difficulties he had successfully surmounted. But of course individuals have no choice in such matters, except the somewhat ungracious refusal to accept, and it is always better for a man if his friends can ask why he was not rather than why he was selected. Besides, it distinctly strengthened the Service in the estimation of the outside world—where little was known of its real value to Chinese and foreigners alike—that its Chief should bear the outward and visible sign of recognition by his own country. Foreign Governments fully recognized these services, and Sir Robert Hart would have been put to it to wear all his decorations at one and the same time. To do so would have required the physique of a Bismarck or a Kitchener, especially as Chinese Orders are rather on the large side.

Not the least of the Inspector General's achievements was the firm, and yet not unkind, manner in which he cleared the Service List of the Central Powers element. The hundred and forty-seven Germans and Austrians appeared with a note, "Name removed from List," opposite each entry. They were given the option of resigning, but declined to do so, probably by order of the Aller Höchste, but, nevertheless, they were issued pay and retiring allowances to date. It is but right to chronicle that the Teutonic element contained many men of undoubted ability and some of the highest talent. All were reliable and steady both in the Indoor and Outdoor, and before the upset of 1914 got on admirably with their non-German colleagues. I should not like to say, as one eminent authority declared, that they were the backbone of the Service, for that would be a libel on the British, who from first to last have worked and suffered

and kept up the British tail against all assaults from within and without. But the Germans were a good second, and were ever loyal to the Chinese Government and its British Inspector General. The names of Detring, Kleinwächter, Schoenicke, Hirth, Ohlmer, and many others will be remembered until the Service itself shall have become a legend only. Pity it is that we cannot think of them now without the shadow of the Great War between, though in the end they paid even a heavier price than the Allies did.

I have touched elsewhere on our War difficulties in getting even the most (apparently) harmless products out to China. Pins, for example, were "taboo" as well as ink, because as a rule made of brass wire. But pins were demanded feverishly, and I scoured all round and even sent an order to the U.S.A., only to find that the Great Republic could not do much better than we at home. "Present ills are quite enough, what with 'food hogs,' profiteers, the 'eat, drink and be merry' contingent, to say nothing of the puerile folly of both pessimists and optimists." I wrote this to my colleague in Shanghai to extenuate the unhappy shortage in pins. My soul was also vexed because a bomb had just fallen in Queen Anne's Gate, right in front of Viscount Grey's town house, and close by our office, so I added: "Therefore, *terque, quaterque beati* are, or should be, those who live in China and draw a Haikwan tael worth 4s. 8d."

It was difficult for our colleagues in the security of Chinese Treaty Ports, remote from war, to realize what was going on in London. One man wrote me: "I suppose you are having a good time at home," but what I said in reply shall not here be recorded! I may add that it was a conviction firmly held by all who had *not* been in the London Office that an appointment there was almost more than equivalent to leave, but this agreeable illusion was always and promptly dissipated as soon as anyone stepped within its strenuous portals. It was hardly a case of "Who

enters here leaves Hope behind," but he certainly left "Leave" behind. I have recorded that from 1891 to 1896 I had one *exeat* of fifteen days. From 8th July, 1914, to 2nd October, 1920, I had literally, and precisely, no leave at all.

With one thing the London Office had nothing to do, and that was the neglect of British propaganda in the Far East. It was often quoted as a reproach that so little of this was circulated during the Great War, and I was naturally attracted to the subject of what was being done to educate the Chinese mind towards a just view of the Allies in their struggles against the Boche and all his works. By the kindness of a friend I was enabled to look over the collection of anti-German propaganda in the library of the War Museum, at that time under the Board of Trade, including an interesting *résumé* of the whole scheme as far as China was concerned, from the able pen of a leading member of the British Consular Service. By that time a rather awkward slip in the Chinese inscription under the portrait of King George had been set right. He had therein been labelled "Ying-Kuo-Wang," or British Chief—a most inadequate, if not disrespectful, description of the King of England and Emperor of India. The term "Wang" suggested to my mind that no foreign sinologue was responsible, and so it turned out. The author was a Cantonese, and evidently untrained in the Imperial traditions and expressions of his own country. But somehow or other he had got himself accepted as an infallible authority on "things Chinese," and I believe the Department involved was not particularly grateful to the people whose protests against his lapses at long last prevailed.

Propaganda of another sort, inculcating common sense and celerity, was not unneeded amongst our British improvised staff of "control" officials in various Departments, and an architect friend of mine had many amusing stories of the vagaries of these amiable

individuals. However, he admitted that my experiences in getting a lighthouse shipped out to China were probably a record. I started in to accomplish this order, and at first it was a *non possumus*. It just "couldn't be done," particularly as neither I nor the vendors were able to answer their queries as to the component parts of the structure. "Were materials possibly useful to the Munitions Department," or to the Stationery, or Heaven knows what authority, "concealed within it"? I did not want to be thrown into a dungeon on the charge of giving false or withholding true information, but I tried to create the impression that the Munitions and the Stationery, and all the other Departments would not be a penny the worse, and we should win the War just the same if that lighthouse got away. This was not satisfactory. In vain I pleaded that it was a second-hand lighthouse built before the War, and left without a friend in the world because the original buyers could not afford to pay for it when China good-naturedly took it on. Nothing doing! They calmly handed out innumerable irrelevant schedules for me to waste my time and theirs in filling up, descriptive of all the elements contained in Lantern and Tower. It would have been quite as useful to ask for certificates of its honesty and sobriety.

Meanwhile, as these humorous proceedings dragged on, the need was very great, since in consequence of a destructive earthquake an important section of the China Sea was practically unlighted, or might at any time become so. Yet they would not let go, seeming almost hypnotized by the word "lighthouse," until at last I engaged freight for a certain date—not an easy thing to do in those days of put-off ships and general scarcity of tonnage—and with the courage of despair told the Department that I had done so. I also told some other people as well, and drew a harrowing, but true, picture of what refusal might mean—ships going to pieces on cruel rocks, sailors drowning, and

so on. Of course there really was no question of refusal—only that awful phrase “the Department must be fully satisfied before granting a permit.” It was merely their fun, but it did an immense deal to hamper legitimate trade all through the War.

All through the War! A kind of ghastly eternity, for, as Rosalind said in the Forest of Arden, “Time travels in divers paces with divers persons,” and his pace was terribly hard, especially towards the close of that titanic struggle. But the end came at last. I was at the office as usual on that November Monday, when at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month cannon in London announced the signing of the Armistice and cessation of hostilities on all fronts as from that moment.

Immediately everything else ceased as well as hostilities, and all Westminster swarmed into the streets, while gradually vast crowds rolled in from other quarters. The War was over, and we had won! Or, as our Tommies put it—“Gurr finny.” People went round shouting and cheering, many pressing towards Buckingham Palace. This continued the whole day, and culminated in an overwhelming concourse in Trafalgar Square that evening. The street lamps had been hurriedly cleaned and their rays seemed of unearthly brilliance after four years’ darkness. “Big Ben” was once more illuminated and struck the hours rustily, while the chimes were not available. The sound suggested that he was not at his best, although the dear old “crack” had survived all right. In fact, everything went as described in Hindenburg’s “March through London,” only it was the Allies, praise Heaven, and not the Germans who were *Über Alles*.

We joined in and stood by Big Ben waving little flags and thinking—thinking—thinking. People round us were riotously joyful, and there were a few tears, too, but I saw no one the worse for liquor or disorderly. Vehicular traffic had to proceed at a

snail's pace, and 'buses were beflagged and carrying double and treble their legal load.

Perhaps the most wonderful night that London ever saw in its history of two thousand years. Everybody cheered everybody, for we had all been through the Apocalypse together, the Terrible Four Horsemen had ridden us down in agony and darkness, and now by the Grace of God the mighty Angel of Victory had sounded his glorious trumpet. We had a right to cheer !

CHAPTER XXV

Demobilization of the Chinese Customs employees in the Great War—Alas, not all!—The Roll of Honour and War services of the survivors—The new Customs Pension Scheme and all it meant to employees, old and young—The London Office share in the preliminaries—A hard case in International Law—I weed out the L.O. archives—Recollections of James Duncan Campbell, its original Chief—My retirement after forty-seven years' service.

MY ORIGINAL APPOINTMENT to the London Office in 1914 was for two years or so, but a grim Fate altered the I.G.'s plans and mine, and I am glad to think circumstances enabled me to hold on and "do my bit" not only during the War, but when peace presented some other problems.

The first of these was, of course, demobilization, and in the case of the Chinese Customs this was complicated by not only being demobbed in England but getting back to their posts in the Far East. Our Customs men at the various fronts were looking China-wards, but much had to be done before we could get them all free and re-shipped to China.

Alas, not all! Some of the very best were no longer there, but we collected their names and undying service and sent them on to Peking to be inscribed on the Roll of Honour. A few, sons of old friends, I had known from their earliest childhood. Others, equally dear, were united by many memories of work and play together in comfortable and uncomfortable places, both of which fall to the common lot of Customs employees not specially favoured by the Inspector General or protected against him by Providence, the twin Deities who ruled our lives and very often reacted on one another.

THE CUSTOMS ROLL OF HONOUR

In the first category were Gordon Raeburn and "Tommy" Cocker, and in the second Hervé Picard-Destelan, Gerald Leach, Bethune Bruce, Perry-Ayscough, and Delastre, an especially charming young Frenchman : all good men and true, whose lives had often been intertwined with ours in the intimacy of "small-port" conditions. On the other side was Maximilian Hey, who died fighting against the Russians in quite early days.

When the Roll of Honour of the Chinese Customs Service appears it will be one more instance—and of deep significance—of its international character. United in peace under British headship, and not disunited in spirit at least when Immortality on the field of battle gave us back our "comrades" in a common sacrifice. "They march in a Deathless Army!"

With our depleted shipping and the bones of seven hundred big liners rotting round our coasts and elsewhere, passages abroad were hard to get, especially as at first no women were allowed to travel, and men naturally wished not to leave their women-kind behind after the cruel separations and anxieties of the past four years. But with the benevolent co-operation of those in authority we were enabled to make matters as easy as possible, and the disappointments were as few as they were inevitable. To get back to full pay and China conditions seemed like a little Heaven below after Flanders and the trenches, and no one was more pleased than the Inspector General to welcome them again in the fold. It should be recorded that both Sir Francis and Lady Aglen did everything in their power to look after the Customs men during the War, and I had the privilege of furthering their many good deeds and kindnesses that can never be forgotten by the recipients. And all our sympathies went out to Lady Aglen in the tragic loss of her only brother, who fell in Gallipoli. He was dearly loved and widely mourned, "Bay Balfour."

Among those who came through all right, the

IN THE CHINESE CUSTOMS SERVICE

Service was especially proud of Hayley Bell, who went as a Senior Assistant and returned as a Lieutenant-Colonel, D.S.O. He won it splendidly, side by side with his men in the trenches. In 1920 the Inspector General caused to be published a "Record of Services given and Honours attained by Members of the Chinese Customs Service" during the Great War—a proud memory for us all.

Also in 1920, the great event for the Chinese Customs was the promulgation by the Inspector General of the new scheme to provide for the compulsory retirement of employees after forty years of active service or on attaining the age of sixty. Long and anxiously had the Service looked forward to some plan that would relieve a situation year by year growing more intolerable for Seniors and Juniors alike.

The new scheme had been made possible by the refund to the Customs of the large sums issued from revenue sources from time to time for the inception and maintenance of the Chinese Postal Administration. Its main features were the introduction of the principle of compulsory contribution by those who wished to share in its benefits, while neither contributors nor non-contributors were to lose the "bonus" formerly paid to employees of over seven years' standing.

Naturally nearly everybody rushed in to contribute—the last joined as well as those of us who had grown grey, if not weary, at our fiscal tasks. Seniors began to disappear, with the result that the whole Service took a leap upwards, not only in pay but in contentment and hope. The scheme was to become finally effective after the 31st March, 1921, and I elected to remain on the books until the finish. "He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved." It had been my motto all through, even in the dark days of sprue, when the end did not seem very far off. And although I felt that I could not hope for much in the way of long life after so many working days, it was a satisfaction to me to be still on deck

when the bell rang for the "old uns" to depart in peace.

Meanwhile the London Office had lots to do. G. E. Morrison, though desperately ill, retained his interest in the under-dog in the Customs Service, Indoor and Outdoor, until the very last. He had always worked for us in that vein, and it was only a short time before his too early death that I received a long letter from him regarding a threatened strike of the Outdoor Staff in Shanghai. I was, therefore, glad to be able to reassure him on the main issue. I wrote: "The obligation of every employee of the Chinese Customs is to obey the orders of the Inspector General or quit" (*Aut disce aut discede*).

"As regards disaffection, one can hardly hope for its total disappearance, but as far as the management of the Outdoor is concerned there is little doubt that the whole tendency of the recent reorganization has been to remove grievances and improve pay, prospects, and conditions. From all I can hear, the older Outdoor Staff men have kept aloof from the recent agitation, which appears to me to have been engineered by a few restless spirits not altogether untinted with Bolshevik leanings."

It is sad to think that the fears of his friends were justified, and Morrison never resumed his work in Peking. In his last letter to me, 12th April, 1920, he wrote: "I have come down to a place known as Sunny Sidmouth, but sunshine is sadly to seek. In twenty-two days we have had three days' sunshine."

He died at Sidmouth not very long afterwards. The Inspector General, Sir Francis Aglen, came home on leave about that time, and we naturally spoke of Morrison, who had perhaps been slightly misled as to the Outdoor men's grievances. However, the subject dropped with the I.G.'s remark: "De Mortuis."

Sir Francis was keen to recruit the Indoor from ex-Service men, but was much hampered by the age difficulty. Hitherto our candidates ranged between eighteen and twenty-three years of age, and generally

went out at about an average of twenty years. A Fourth Assistant joining at twenty could put in his full forty years of service and get the complete benefit of the Superannuation Scheme, but older men could not do so. Besides, there would be the anomaly and inconvenience of these men serving under their juniors in years, but senior to them in the Service List. Again, a boy fresh from school had a better chance of learning Chinese, a vital matter more than ever under the new scheme of periodical and progressive examination in the language. However, we made exceptions while preserving the general integrity of the rules, and passed some very good candidates who had shown their metal in Flanders and elsewhere.

Incidentally, the new scheme gave us a good deal of extra work in the Office. This was because of the arrangement that the pensions were to be in the form of Life Annuities, the beneficiary to select his own Life Office. This, of course, opened up a very large field, and many inquirers came to us for advice and assistance. "To which Office should he go, and in what country?"

I collected a large lot of circulars and explanations of the various "options" given by offices in Great Britain, Canada, U.S.A., and on the Continent of Europe, as well as of the various Government schemes. Our inquirers were of divers nationalities, and their individual needs of equal diversity. However, we did our best. Life Insurance was one of my hobbies, and I was familiar with its details in all its ramifications. Moreover, it was a personal question with me as well, since my own retirement was in sight, and I had to choose an office myself in addition to advising others. So one way and another we were able to assist the Inspector General in the details of this scheme, and so far as I know—even in an ungrateful world—we did not earn anyone's reproaches; the fact being that all *first-class* offices follow similar lines, offer similar rates, and give the same security.

A more tangled and painful work was thrust on us about the same time. There is, I believe, an old adage that "hard cases make bad law," but some laws appeared to be specially designed to produce hard cases. Several instances in connection with the confiscation of enemy private property came under my notice, and it always seemed to me very hard that money laboriously earned and painfully saved out of official salary in China by our "enemy" ex-colleagues in the Customs should have been ruthlessly withheld from them by our Allies. It was misfortune enough for them to lose their jobs, but to deprive them of their only means of living in addition did not, somehow or other, appear to me to be right. Several very distressing cases of ex-Customs war-widows, whose husbands, recalled to the Colours by laws that recognize no exception in war-time, had lost their lives as well as their livelihood, were known to us; but until peace was finally settled it was not possible for anything to be done for them.

Of course, all belligerents did the same and freely confiscated enemy property whenever it could be got hold of; but nevertheless I hardly think "either peace or war on earth" profited much thereby. One particular case remains in my memory. A Shanghai-born lad, father German, mother British, an English public-school boy, whose Anglo-Saxon was much better than his German, lost all his savings by confiscation at the hands of the British Government. There was even a doubt that his father—a business man in Shanghai—might have acquired British nationality. But he had long passed away, and the son—as I think somewhat Quixotically—declined to save his pelf by taking advantage of the situation. His "spiritual home" was no doubt in the English environment of his early youth and school-days, but as the choice came to him when Germany was "down and out" he would not sign the necessary documents to establish his claim to be a British subject.

The War and its complications of course overshadowed everything, but another duty came my way during my London appointment, and not an altogether cheerful one—namely the necessity for reducing our archives. I was engaged a good deal in my scanty spare time in weeding these out for destruction. Nothing had been disturbed since 1874, and the accumulations were *haar-straübend*, but it had to be done, as our shelves were crowded to bursting-point. I felt, too, that I ought to do it myself, as it required an intimate knowledge of the Office in its past and present to determine what should go and what should be retained. It seemed appropriate that the task should fall to me, as after Mr. Campbell I had put in the longest service in London—thirteen years and seven months.

Aided by the devoted office-keeper Sinstadt, whose knowledge of the whereabouts of every cover was positively uncanny, I went through stacks of “covers.” A cover, I should explain, contained the collected documents of each “order” or “service” dealt with at the London Office. “Orders” were commercial and “services” political. Going through them all I was more than ever struck by the thoroughness with which James Duncan Campbell’s work was done; while Smollett Campbell’s record during the years he was Assistant to his cousin was also beyond all praise. It went to my heart to be a party to consigning the memorial of so much honourable human effort to the pulp-makers, but I think I did it with due respect to the labours of the past, and I dare say that hereafter less personal knowledge will render such a task easier. But I was present with Mr. Campbell in 1881–83 and 1891–96, and if there had been room on the premises I verily believe I should have taken a cowardly refuge and left the inevitable clearance to some successor. However, as things were, I had to face it, and destroyed, so I hope, wisely, but not too well, all that was “fought and finished in the files.”

But for those who knew him and appreciated his self-sacrificing labours Mr. Campbell's record stands fast. He was naturally a great deal in my thoughts, and sitting in his chair—as I said before—I often seemed to hear his hurried footsteps coming up the stairs. I was, of course, well acquainted with all the work—official and private—he did for the great I.G. Did he get the fruits of his labours even in the complimentary sense of recognition of those services at the hands of his Chief? I trow not. Robert Hart was essentially ungenerous in this respect and stood for the idea, "Alone I did it," and this attitude of mind could never admit the existence of an assistant, lest haply the world should doubt his own omniscience. He had one opportunity at least in London of paying a tribute to Campbell's memory, but failed to do so.

Campbell's work was to a great extent confidential and between him and his Chief alone. The Service knew little and the Public nothing of it. He never claimed any credit or recognition, but effaced himself with the loyalty of his Highland blood. All the more reason that the man who did know should have spoken. Campbell predeceased the I.G. He worked on to the last, and his faithful service ended only with his death in 1907.

What little I could do to perpetuate in the London Office the memory of its most distinguished occupant I did, in getting a very fine enlargement of his photograph in Court Dress, wearing the insignia of the Chinese Double Dragon, and the C.M.G. conferred on him by his own Sovereign. It hangs on the wall of the Secretary's room at No. 26, Old Queen Street, looking down on the chair he occupied for thirty-five eventful years—a record which in the nature of things can never be beaten. Mr. Campbell bore a remarkable resemblance to the late Lord Salisbury, and was often mistaken for that eminent Statesman during his daily walk over the bridge in St. James's Park to

luncheon at the Thatched House Club in St. James's Street.

His social and domestic life lies outside the scope of this sketch, but one may be permitted to record that he was a faithful friend, and the best of husbands and fathers, to a wonderful wife of beauty, talent and charm, and a large family of clever sons and handsome daughters. If he had a small endearing human weakness it was a love for first-class cricket that was more than a love—a relic no doubt from his Cheltenham days. Stolen fruit in his case, for his rule was to devote every hour of the day and much of each night to his official duties. Still if an unusually long absence from the Office occurred sometimes in the cricket season no one ever had the bad taste to inquire who won the match !

Personally I owe him much. He possessed an unrivalled (in the Customs Service) despatch style, and had besides a wonderful knowledge of official account-keeping. His diplomatic talents were of a high order, and he had a large share of insight and even "second-sight," added to excellent judgment. I was with him so much at various periods that I should have been a dull ass indeed if I had not absorbed at least something from his ever kindly teachings. His praise ought to have been sung by loftier harps than mine, but as it was not I venture to add a lowly tribute to his many virtues and remarkable qualities of efficiency, self-abnegation and fidelity. Taking him all round, his character and his career, he was rather an illustration of the bitter saying, "that the world knows nothing of its greatest men." Certainly lesser men were better known than James Duncan Campbell and reaped rewards far beyond their deserts, but not beyond his !

By a pleasant coincidence my Chief, Sir Francis Aglen, was at home on short leave towards the date of my retirement, and it was arranged between us that, if I applied for it, I would get my last six months

I CLOSE MY CHINESE RECORD

in the Customs on full-pay leave. This was gratifying as, owing to circumstances, I had enjoyed in my whole career less than half the home leave due by Service rules, and had very seldom while in China had any short leave, so it was an unexpected relief to make my exit unhampered by harness of any kind.

My sands at the London Office were running out, for my leave was granted and my successor appointed. To my sincere joy the billet went to an old friend, Guy Acheson, and he and I worked very happily together for a month "handing over." He slid in and I slid out without a hitch. The Inspector General was in London most of the time, and my last official act was to see him and Lady Aglen off to China on the 2nd October, 1920.

After the leave-taking, Acheson and I walked back to the Office, signed the final documents which ended my long years of work, shook hands and parted.

Here, too, I part from my readers, if any, and close my Chinese record.

JERSEY,

Easter, 1924.

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